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Hua Xu Yin - Chapter 01-12 Part 2

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Part 1

Hua Xu Yin: First Meeting (Part 1)

[February 12, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [3 Comments](#)



I'm on a roll. I realised that there are no scene translation tit bits for what is currently my favourite C-novel (the horror!), Hua Xu Yin. I was itching to translate something from HXY for some time – at first, I was going to do the epilogues, but two paragraphs in, I dropped it because it was really just too depressing.

After discussing it with Peanuts, we thought that it would be most appropriate to kick off with a translation of A'Fu and Mo Yen's first meeting. The rumor is that this will be cut from the drama adaptation (I think at this point, they should not use the term adaptation and just stick an "inspired by" tag on it – although maybe they have paid too much for the book rights not to call it an adaptation).

Their first meeting is pretty long as they wind up spending a week or so together. I don't have the patience to wait to translate finish before posting it in its entirety, so I will be posting it in parts. So here is the first one – hope you guys enjoy it!

—

A midsummer's night – there are many lovely ways to describe it. However, reality is often cruel. It is said that during midsummer nights, poisonous snakes are particularly aggressive. Three students who went outside the School grounds have already died from incidents of snake poisonings; all of the students have

been warned to take extra care.

I was young enough to still believe that I was very special and therefore will not end up like the unlucky trio. So I went out of the School grounds without any bringing with me any red orpiment [1]. Thinking back, the three unlucky students who died from snake poisonings must have also thought that they were very special. Everyone thinks that they are special, but in the eyes of others, they are not that special. In the eyes of the snake, they are even less special. From the perspective of a poisonous snake, only those who carry red orpiment are special. When we are young, we keep chasing after what makes us different from other people. But when we grow up, we always chase after what makes us similar with other people. If we could switch the two mindsets around, wouldn't that be good? At least, that may have saved those three students' lives. They might have ended up as coma patients, but at least they would meet such sad deaths.

As a person who similarly does not carry red orpiment, the poisonous snakes treated me the same way they treated the aforementioned three students. A small pitviper viciously bit my leg, its poison entered my bloodstream and circulated around my body. I swayed and fell down. I finally understood the above and randomly remembered that the painting I completed two days ago have been hung properly. After remembering that, I felt that I had nothing left to regret and thus can pass on in peace. I closed my eyes and waited for death.

Just then, I hear the sound of footsteps approaching and stopped next to my body. A pair of hands lifted me up. The clean scent of plum fragrance wafted into my nostrils, bringing to my mind the picture of a silent and starry night in February during the plum blossom season.

—

I woke up to the feeling of blood rushing towards my lower abdomen, and my hands clutch at my belly in pain. Something soft is pressed against my leg where I was bitten, which had become numb. My knee was bent at an angle and my leg was held up by something that felt like a leather cord. It all felt very weird. I could not stand it and struggled to open my eyes to see what was happening. What I saw almost took my life away.

I was in a cave and I was lying on a stone bed. Under the white moonlight, my

right leg was being held up by a man's hand. His mouth was pressed against the wound on my ankle. From that angle, I could only see his profile that was covered by his hair; it made me want to impulsively brush it out of the way. He did not realise that I had awoken, and continued to sit quietly at my bedside with his lips pressed against my leg, his long hair brushing against my leg.

I naturally assumed that I was being molested. So I gave him a good hard kick, which caused a chain reaction. It resulted in blood starting to flow from a certain unmentionable part of my body.

He evaded my attack nimbly by taking a step back, which showed that he had good martial arts. I did not even understand how he had shifted his position from sitting to standing in a flash.

I stared at him. In the moonlight flooding in from the cave entrance, his body appeared tall and straight. A silver mask covered the top half of his face. After a moment, he reached up and wiped a streak of blood from his lips. The corners of his lips lifted, "What a scary girl. I saved your life and you repay my kindness with evil?"

I could not give any explanation; I started crying as soon as I opened my mouth. The heaving from my crying required the use of my lower abdomen muscles, which caused blood to continue flow out and stain my skirt. And even worst, I was wearing a white skirt that day.

His line of sight focused on my skirt, paused before asking, "Menstrual blood [2]?"

I replied between sobs, "Thank you, but I am not thirsty. I may have contracted infection of the blood, and will surely die very soon."

He continued looking at my skirt for a while, before clearing his throat, "You won't die. It's just that your woman's time has come."

I did not understand, "What is a woman's time?"

He hesitated, "This is something your mother should tell you."

I said, "Big brother, I don't have a mother. Please tell me."

It is difficult to imagine that I would learn all about a woman's cycle from a

total male stranger. But it would have been even more difficult to imagine learning about this from Master, “It is blood that comes from your womb according to a prescribed cycle...”

Yes. Looking back, even the Heavens must have felt that this was too much to ask of a 70 year old elder, and so had to borrow another’s mouth to pass this information to me.

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[1] Also known as realgar. A poisonous substance used on rats in Medieval Spain and 16th Century England (and in this case, to ward off and kill snakes).

[2] The phrased used here is “葵水” which literally translates to “sunflower” and “water”. This led to A’Fu assuming that he was offering her water to drink.

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Comments

Argh. This is not a verbatim translation of the original text. I have to condense some parts because it was getting too long and unwieldy in English and frankly, some of the descriptions were just beyond my abilities. If anyone wants to do an edit and help me fill in the missing blanks, feel free to do so and I will credit you accordingly.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

Part 2

Hua Xu Yin: First Meeting (Part 2)

[February 17, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [Leave a comment](#)



First of all, for those who are interested in reading HXY in English, please visit [Chenguang's blog](#). She's started translating HXY from scratch (respect!) and you can find the [prologue chapter here](#).

I'm going to continue translating bits and pieces that I fancy from HXY for fun (because I don't have the discipline to commit to translating the whole book systematically). So I'm leaving that to CG, who has permission to incorporate my drafts. CG actually knows Chinese so her translations are probably way more accurate than mine. Lol.

Finally, this post is dedicated to Az, who is finally seeing the light about HXY. Hurrah to Princess Zombie!

He tells that he is called Mu Yen [1]. Of course that is not his real name; if a man wears a mask on his face, surely he will also mask his name. Otherwise, there will be no point in him hiding his face.

As for myself – I told him that I am called Jun Fu Gui [1]. What if this man is the enemy of the father I have never met? If he knew that I am my father's daughter, he might kill me in a fit of anger. There are many examples in history of princesses getting killed because of their fathers' sins. That is not counting those who have been forced to marry husbands they dislike, leading to unhappy marriages that last a lifetime.

— —

And just like that, we stayed in the cave for four to five days. We drank from the spring outside the cave and ate wild fish from the spring. I could not leave to return to the School as the snake poison in my body has not fully cleared. Mu Yen expressed that when you set out to save someone, you must ensure that that person is saved; it is not his character to give up halfway. Every day, I must drink medicine, and then bleed myself by making a small incision on my wrist.

Mu Yen usually played the zither during my bleeding sessions. His zither is a seven string zither, whose strings are made using natural silk that produces lush melodies that have the effect of lessening pain. Whenever Mu Yen played the zither, I would think of Jun Wei and his zither playing abilities that have the effect of making people unwilling to live in this world any longer. I regret that Jun Wei was unable to come and listen to this heavenly music; it would sure make him want to commit suicide. Then, no one else in this world will be harmed by his "music" again.

During these five days, I really wanted to remove Mu Yen's mask to see how his face for myself. But when I recall that it might result in him cutting me down with a single blow, I really didn't dare to do it. A person's curiosity can really cause trouble. Even when the matter does not concern you at all, your curiosity may drive you to get to the root of the matter. This is really finding trouble when trouble does not find you.

By noon of the sixth day, the wound on my leg has almost healed completely and I can move around independently again. Mu Yen brought up my foot to inspect it, "It's not necessary to bleed yourself any more. I'll send you back first thing tomorrow."

I never thought that time will fly by so swiftly. I have still yet to successfully remove his mask. Panicking, I refused in a rush, before turning my gaze to the floor. He asked, "You don't wish to leave?"

I shook my head and said, "No, no... but... Big Brother, aren't you leaving with me? This cave doesn't have many things; surely you don't intend to settle down here?"

He said in a serious voice, "I cannot leave. I must stay here."

"But what would you do if you stayed here? You'll be all alone; there'll be no one here to chat with you and no one to listen to you play the zither."

He bent his head and plucked at the zither, "I am waiting for someone. I am afraid if I leave, the person I am waiting for will not be able to find me."

At once, I found myself in an awkward position. If I question him further, I might invade his privacy. But if I don't question him further, I'm not sure how to change the subject. "About this..." I began.

He rose from his seat and laughed "Speak of the devil. I am really lucky today.

I turned around to look at the entrance of the cave. I did not know for how long the group of men in black had stood there. Just as I laid my eyes on the men, all of them took out their weapons in unison, their sickle-like blades aligned together neatly, and you can tell that these men are a trained team. (I later found out that those long sickle-like sabres are called scimitars. (Sickle and

scimitar – while they may look alike, one is used to cut down grass, but the other is used to cut down people.)

I seldom leave the School in the mountains, so I can't be said to be very worldly. At the sight of so many sabres pointing straight at me, I unconsciously took a step back and Mo Yen stepped in front of me.

“Can you actually take them on?” I asked him worriedly.

The sabre wielders started their attacks before he could even reply. Mo Yen pushed me out of the way and launched himself into their midst, his light coloured robe twisting and turning within the melee. His figure blurred, each of his movements purposeful and efficient – he seized one of his attackers by the wrist, turned the latter around and thrust the latter's blade into another attacker behind himself, before quickly stepping out of the way to avoid having the man's blood splattering on his clothes.

Within a short space of time, Mo Yen managed to subdue majority of the attackers, leaving behind only two or three. When the last surviving attacker realized that he cannot defeat Mu Yen, he throws his sword straight me.

Master hated violence and so I have never been taught how to fight. I was rooted to the ground beneath me as the sabre flew straight at my throat. That was definitely a bad situation to be in.

Thinking back, I imagined that if only I got so frightened that my legs gave way and I collapse on the ground, the sword would likely have flown over my head and I would escape death. However, my constitution was just too hardy. Even in such dire circumstances, my legs did not weaken and I could only become a standstill target.

— —

[1] Mu Yen's name translates to something like “words of admiration”. His surname Mu is taken from his mother's surname, “Murong”.

[2] This translates something to “Wealthy Lord”. The contrast to Mo Yen's more elegant sounding name makes me laugh.

Comments

Argh. Fight scenes are too hard to translate. That’s all I have to say.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

If fate permits, we will meet here again

Hua Xu Yin: If fate permits, we will meet here again

[February 21, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [3 Comments](#)



When you guys read this, I bet you guys are thinking that I am either translating some really boring scenes or the story is really boring. So yes – nothing much special happens in this scene. But I wanted to translate it because it introduces one of my favourite side characters, Mu Yi. I will be translating a scene between A’Fu and Mu Yi later (finally, a scene where it’s not all about the OTP) where A’Fu basically “checks out the competition”.

If you guys have not gone to read Chenguang’s awesome translation, please make your way to her site now. She has just posted the [first half of Chapter 1](#). And because she’s reached where I’ve last left off, I am going to stop translating the rest of the first meeting.

Speaking of the Chenguang’s translation, we had an interesting discussion on how to translate 浮生尽, which is the title of Song Ning’s story arc. After a little digging around, I concluded that it most likely references one of Li Bai’s *On a Banquet with my Cousins on a Spring Night in the Peach Garden*, which I feel I must share with all HXY fans:

*“Now the heavens and earth are the hostels of creation
And time has seen a full hundred generations*

*Ah, this floating life, like a dream
True happiness is so rare!"*

—

[Introductory Remarks: So they both meet in the mountains again, where they first met. A'Fu was travelling alone and Mu Yan saves her from some wolves.]

And this was how I met Mu Yan once again. Although my heart was filled with all sorts of romantic feelings, I understood that his sudden appearance at this random place is cannot be simply be attributed to the phrase, "if fate permits, you will meet even if you are separated by a thousand miles."

A few men in black appeared in front of us suddenly. I thought to myself, this is really deja vu; they must be here to kill Mu Yan again. Without a word, I took a step back. Another step. And yet another step. Before I can retreat behind Mu Yan, the men knelt before us and said in unison, "Master, we have arrived late."

All of their faces wore expressions of shame. I turned to look at Mu Yan in surprise. He ignored the men, and asked me, "Can you move?" I stared at him, and the corners of his mouth quirked, "Aren't you so afraid that your knees are shaking?"

"My knees are not shaking!"

He shook his head, "You're lying with your eyes wide open."

"I am not lying with my eyes open!"

"Then take a few steps for me to see."

Mu Yan was right – I was lying with my eyes open. My knees were actually still shaking. Everyone has their weaknesses, and mine are snakes and wolves. But for Mu Yan to point this out so bluntly, I could not help but feel a bit hurt. I did not want to appear weak in front of him as I did not want him to look down on me. If it was Jun Wei asking me, I would surely have replied loudly, "So what if my knees are shaking – what can you do about it?"

But it is different with Mu Yan. I only want to show him the best side of me. It is akin to not wanting to let the person you like know that you also need to go to the toilet. But, in my case, I really do not need to go to the toilet anymore.

Suddenly, Mu Yan said quietly, “Excuse me,” before bodily picking me up in his arms. Someone sighed. I could only see the moon when I lifted my head. My weight did not seem to impede Mu Yan’s movements at all. He only paused in his steps when he passed the men in black. The men bow their heads.

“Do you know what are bodyguards?” Mu Yan’s voice echoed in the valley. “Your swords must be placed in front of me. That is what it takes to be my bodyguards.” Their heads dropped even lower. This is the aura of royalty, of someone who is used to being in command and obeyed. Even my Royal Father, who is not a very able ruler, is able to use this aura to control his wives.

Suddenly, one of the men in the middle of the group jumped up and peeled of his face. “What is he doing?” “What do you think?” I answered my own question, “he looks like he’s peeling of a facial disguise!”

Just as we were conversing, that person pulled of a thin mask that looked like a facial disguise and cried, “I was almost suffocated by this.” I looked harder and realised that under the disguise, it was actually the face of a pretty young girl.

Mu Yan’s eyebrow twitched and said, “I was wondering why they were so useless today. They were suppose arrive here covertly, but spooked the birds. Now I know it is because you were hampering them!”

The girl ignored his words, and laughed, “You can’t blame me! If one must be able to place his sword in front of Brother before can he be your bodyguard, then there aren’t that many people in the world who qualify to be your bodyguard! Let me look at the person in your arms. I thought you were still obsessed with Qin Ziyang. Is this going to be my future sister in law? Have you finally let go of Ziyang? Eh – sister – are you my sister in law? My name is Mu Yi. What is your name?”

I could only stare at her and pursed my lips. Mu Yan interrupted her, “A’Fu is only a young girl.”

Mu Yi asked immediately, “Then, you and Ziyang...”

I listened to their conversation and my heart sank. But from my close proximity to Mu Yan in his arms, I did not detect any reaction in him when this Ziyang’s name was brought up. It could be that he had reacted without me realising it; after all, my senses are not what they used to be.

Comments

This is definitely not a verbatim translation. Chenguang and I have a chat and I think we've come to the realisation that well – verbatim translations don't really work in English sometimes because they just become long and rambling. So the translation above summarizes some of the description and omits some unimportant parts. But the gist of it is there.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

The Way of a Princess

Hua Xu Yin: The Way of a Princess

[February 24, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [19 Comments](#)



Oh – I am worried. Really worried. Why does Mu Yan now have a blue fringe?! Oh and you should definitely check out [Spcnet's HXY thread](#) where more pictures of the drama production have surfaced. Frankly, the costuming is just... not very flattering. KC's hairstyle reminds me of some 90s-noughties wuxia drama – its been a while since I've seen fringes and sideburns like that.

It's a hoot and a half. To date, nobody has seen the female lead (Lin Yuan) and second male lead (Luo Jin). What made me laugh is that apparently there was a meet-and-greet press conference and the poster only had KC, YH and JX. Where are the rest of them?

On a side note, Happy Chap Goh Mei to all my Chinese readers. To celebrate the end of Chinese New Year celebrations and the pretty full moon outside my

window, I happily present to you one of my favourite parts in the novel where Mu Yi and A'Fu talks about Mu Yan. What I like about this scene is that a third party objectively assesses Mu Yan's actions towards A'Fu. There is also a part where A'Fu contemplates Ye Zhen's death.

[Picture credit: Liu Xiao Xiao @ spcnet's HXY thread].

—

[This scene follows on from [“If fate permits, we will meet here again”](#).]

Mu Yi and I shared a tent. I wanted to wait for her to fall asleep before me as I was afraid that she will find out that she was sleeping next to a corpse. But Mu Yi did not understand my kind intentions and instead kept me company outside the tent to watch the stars.

I learned from her the reason why I met Mu Yan here today (as I thought, it cannot be wholly attributed to Fate). It is because he had just settled some matters at home and was returning to his own residence. I thought, it seems like he lives apart from his parents; this means that I won't need to take care of his parents if I marry him. I then realised that I was really thinking too much.

“Your brother, how old is he? Is he married?” I finally asked Mu Yi the questions that have been bothering me all along.

Mu Yi stiffened before raising her cup to her lips and looked at me, “Speaking of that...”

I felt the Pearl leap up into my throat.

She sipped her tea and repeated, “About that...”

I felt like strangling her as she took another few sips of her tea. I restrained my fingers from reaching out for her.

“Why are you asking these questions?”

I coughed and shifted my position, “Nothing, really. I have a friend whom I'm thinking of introducing to your brother.”

Her eyes sparkled as she looked at me and I coughed uncomfortably again, “That's the truth.”

She raised her head and said with a small smile, "My brother really cares about you. "Back home, if the pretty ladies who admire my brother linked their hands together, they can easily surround the city! But my brother had never even spared them a single glance. But today, my brother actually personally assisted you because your movements were inconvenienced. If those ladies back at home found about about what happened, they will surely beat you to death!"

I was not happy being cast in the less attractive role, so I said carelessly, "I also have many admirers in the past. The queue from my family's door can stretch from the start of the street right to the end!"

Of course, I did not mention that half of them came because of money and the other half because of power.

"Wa – then you're actually quite a good match with my brother."

Her words made me very happy. I said further, "Don't speak about these things so carelessly. Doesn't your brother already have a girl he likes? Isn't her name Ziyang or something like that...?"

She interrupted me immediately, "She doesn't have a chance. How dare she try to assassinate my brother. She doesn't have the good fortune of becoming my sister-in-law this lifetime!"

I asked, "Is it that their relationship being kept secret?"

Mu Yi giggled, "You are really funny. I tell you this, even if that had not happened, our father will never let brother marry Ziyang. In matters such as romance, my brother..." She stopped as if she just thought of something, "Speaking of which, you must really make extra effort with my brother. Compared to Ziyang, there is another woman that you must pay attention to."

She stopped smiling and looked seriously at me, "There is only one woman whom my brother genuinely respects. You should have heard of her; she is the youngest daughter of the former King of Wei, who committed suicide when her kingdom surrendered, the famous Princess Wenchang, Ye Zhen."

The incident that Mu Yi brought up only happened half a year ago but it seemed to have happened in another lifetime. Mu Yi continued with a frown, "I was not there. I heard it had not rained in Wei for a very long time, but it rained

heavily on the day Ye Zhen died, as if the Heavens were shedding tears of grief for the Princess Wenchang.

They said that Ye Zhen threw herself off the city walls that were at least 1000 feet high without hesitation. Even the Chen warriors respected her resolve. Brother referred to Ye Zhen as incomparable, and said that during these many turbulent years when countries rose and fell, there have only been one such princess who died to preserve the dignity of her state. If only she was not born a woman and was still young at that time, she would definitely have achieved something great in her lifetime.

I also thought it was a pity. It is said that Ye Zhen was very beautiful and educated; her name and talent should have been recorded in history. But unfortunately, she died so young. This is the tragedy of being born into a royal family!”

I said, “What you really want to say is...”

Mu Yi put down her cup and scratched her head, “That’s right... what was I trying to say just now?”

I placed my hand on my chest where I could not feel any heartbeat. I thought for a moment and replied, “The fate of being a royal. There are responsibilities that you must assume in exchange for being given a life of privilege and power from young. Ye Zhen died in the manner befitting her station. One must act in accordance with his position and assume the responsibilities of the same.

When the Royal Family enjoys the benefits of the taxes and tributes paid by their people, do they complain of being born into royalty? It is a greater tragedy for one to only lament his fate of being born into royalty when he has to pay the dues for the privileges that he has enjoyed all this while!”

After I finished my tirade, we felt as if our conversation has taken a serious turn and immediately changed the topic.

—

Comments

I think the reason why this is one of my favourite scenes is because this scene

shows that Mu Yan cares for her both as Ye Zhen and A'Fu. It leaves a bittersweet taste because it opens up the question of what could have been; what if Su Yu met Ye Zhen before she died – that they realised that the other was Mo Yan and Jun Fugui? Would Ye Zhen still have chosen to die? If Ye Zhen didn't die, would they have a future together or would they be like the OTP in Eastern Palace?

But if Ye Zhen didn't choose to die, Su Yu would never have afforded her that special place in his heart. And I confess, I love that Ye Zhen is so matter of fact about why she had to die. She's not doing it as a Grand Gesture, but because to her, it is her duty to do so. It doesn't sit well with modern mores, I know, but I respect the staunchness of her belief.

I'm not sure why they have to make Mu Yan fight for the throne in the drama. Because really, A'Fu/YZ is much happier outside of the palace. Her personality is just not suited for life in the palace; hell that's what got her killed in the first place.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

Tang Qi Gong Zi on Shen An and Song Ning

Tangqi Gongzi on Shen An and Song Ning

[March 9, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [12 Comments](#)





The brilliant Tangqi Gongzi (and in case this is your first foray here, she's the uber awesomesauce author of *Hua Xu Yin*) recently posted some messages on Weibo about HXY. Since everyone was (and is still) salivating over the Yuan Hong and Jiang Xin (who portray Shen An and Song Ning) stills have been released recently, I thought that you might be interested in what the author thinks of this pairing.

In case you don't know the story yet, you can read [Mrs K's synopsis at her Koala's Playground](#)



"I see ten thousand people debate on whether Shen An loved Song Ning, and it seems like I have never given an explanation. Shen An loves the girl who rescued him, but I feel that it is more accurate to describe this type of "love" as feelings of responsibility. When Song Ning married him later, he developed feelings for her even though she never rescued him and this is the feelings of real love.

His feelings of responsibility made him hate himself as he felt that he has betrayed Liu Qi Qi. This is why he and Song Ning mutually torture each other. Shen An is not scum – just that he has misplaced his affections.

After Song Ning died and the Little Princess used her Huaxu Diao to show him the past. When Shen An said, "that can't be true, I don't believe it", he wasn't being heartless but that it is so painful that he cannot face the truth. Actually, deep down, he already has his doubts, but he ignored them because he is afraid that the truth is what he suspects. And so, when the truth is indeed what he suspected, although he says, "that can't be true," but actually deep down, he has already accepted that that is the truth. He loved her but he was also the one who ruined her, and that has become a tragedy that can never be salvaged."

In case you haven't noticed, Shen An and Song Ning are one of the most star-

crossed lovers ever written in literature. They first met on the battlefield, each fighting for the opposing side. But that is also when she first fell in love with him. And when she heard that he might be dead, she rushed off to the battlefield to try to find him, to try to save him and if she can't save him, at least to bury him properly. She saves him, and he falls in love with the girl who rescues him but mistook another woman for her when he wakes up. But when the war ended and she has the chance to marry him, she realised his mistake but could not do anything about it.

I never thought that Shen An didn't love Song Ning. At the very least, I thought that he has some pretty strong feelings for her, be it love or hate. The shortcomings of the story being told from Song Ning's point of view is that we get so little insight on Shen An's struggles with his respective feelings for both women. It's easy to hate Shen An, because from Song Ning's perspective, her love has given her nothing but heartbreak and misery. But if seen from Shen An's perspective, he is trying to be loyal to the woman he made a promise to, he woman who saved his life, and while you may disagree with him, you can't hate a man who's trying to do that.

I always thought that their relationship was characterized with too much pride. Some people have disagreed, and argued that Song Ning has given up her pride to stay with Shen An. I'm not sure about that – Song Ning says a lot of things to protect her pride, so that she doesn't appear to be a weaker party, even though it does nothing for her relationship with Shen An. There is a scene where she gives a breastplate to him before he goes into battle and she explained why she did it: "If you died, I will have to take care of your entire family". So that just contributes to the love hate relationship between them. Pride made it impossible for them to be the first to bend before the other, to show weakness.

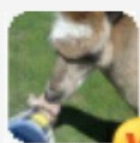
I think when Shen An finally acknowledged the whole truth, he could not forgive himself. He probably tortured himself by replaying all of the times he hurt her and how his indifference and avoidance finally killed her. I don't think anybody can live with that kind of pain and guilt.

When she heard that Shen An has died, Jun Fu remarked that "He would probably still be alive if Song Ning was still around" and that Song Ning would

never have let him die. And Mo Yan replied that “He probably died because Song Ning is gone.”

Jiang Xin is my first choice to play Song Ning so I was ecstatically happy (she was originally rumored to play Jun Fu). I didn’t expect Yuan Hong to be Shen An, but I always loved him and I am excited that he gets to work with such an amazing actress. While I’m not sure how the drama’s going to play out (apparently, a lot of the elements of the storyline has been changed), I hope their story can get fleshed out. For example, I am not sure when or why Shen An falls in love with Song Ning, and I think that’s the greatest “hole” in the story.

And in order to reward you for reading my entire rant, here’s the bonus translation. His Derpiness weib-ed a response to Tangqi Gongzi’s posts and she wrote back!



Vivien唐七公子

2618 1608

宋凝不是你想爱，想爱就能爱，知道真相的萌萌最后眼泪掉下来。（咦这个主题曲似乎还不赖）//@袁弘:看见没看见没看见没～亲妈都说我不渣～不渣就不渣～让我挣开让我明白放手你的爱～（怎么就唱下去了呢😅。。。）

02-06 08:42 来自三星Galaxy Note II

Vivien唐七公子

看到一万人讨论沈岸到底爱不爱宋凝，好像我从来没给过官方解释。沈岸爱上的是救他的姑娘，我觉得这种“爱”其实说是责任感更对些。后来宋凝嫁过来，没有救他这层，他竟然也对她动了心，其实这才是真正的爱情，但是责任感让他深恨自己对不起柳凄凄，所以才会和宋凝相互折磨。沈岸不渣，只是好错了对象。

Yuan Hong: *Do you see, do you see do you see~ Your own mother [he is referring to Tangqi Gongzi here as the author] says that I’m not scum~ Not scum means not scum~ This releases me, this makes me understand, to let go of your love... (How do I continue this song now?)*

Tangqi Gongzi: *You didn’t want to love Song Ning, but you can love if you*

want to love. When you finally know the truth, the tears in your eyes fall in the end (Eh – this theme song isn't too bad.)

Hahaha, apparently, they were actually punning this song (thanks Chenguang):



His Royal

Derpiness: I did good, didn't I?

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).



Shen An and Song Ning (Where there is Love, there is Pain)

Hua Xu Yin: Song Ning and Shen An (Where there is love, there is pain)

[March 14, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [4 Comments](#)



As if my love for Yuan Hong needed to get any deeper, [mookie did this awesome translation of an interview Yuan Hong gave where he spoke about his role as Shen An in Hua Xu Yin](#) (the interview translation is further down, but the post is so packed with Loverboy goodies anyway, it's not a chore to scroll). Apparently, we either get him as Shen An or not get him in HXY at all – between the two, the former would be the lesser of two evils.

Of course, that [kickstarted my SA x SN longing again](#). On mookie's suggestion, I revisited the SA x SN story again and it didn't hurt any less the second time I am afraid. It had come up in my earlier post on Tangqi Gongzi's discussion on SA x SN, where I mentioned a scene where SA x SN exchanged hurtful words even though she went to find him to give him a gift. It struck me that this scene really marked the first time Shen An actually showed his feelings for SN. It also captured their fractured relationship, and the tension in each volley of pithy remarks between the two.

So here it is – dedicated to my darling Yuan Honey, a translation of that scene.

Sigh – the SA x SN love story is so complicated that I didn't even know what to title this post. In the end, I chose the Spanish proverb, "Where there is love, there is pain" because it is more poetic.

But actually, Mary-Kate Olsen said it best (with all the raw feeling of a love that didn't work out):

"I love him and I miss him, and I don't speak with him anymore. It's a hurtful and painful subject."

whimpers

And yes, we do realise that this blog is turning into a Tangqi Gongzi fansite... but we are helpless in the face of her talent.

—

Not long thereafter, Xia's old ruler passed away and was succeeded by his son. Two months later, on the pretext that Jiang had harbored traitors from Xia, Xia's new ruler declared war against Jiang. The Jiang ruler ordered Shen An to lead the troops into battle.

The lush fragrance of April was coming to an end, a cold and barren moon hung in the sky. Song Ning stood at the foot of her bed for half the night and watched the moon slowly descended towards the horizon. In the end, she still was not able to bear the thought of him dying on the battlefield. While he was not a good husband, he is the hero that she fell in love at first sight half a year ago. The saying that "while some people do not have much experience in love, they have a romantic soul" aptly describes Song Ning here.

She took out her suit of armor that accompanied her to Jiang as part of her dowry and removed the huxing jing[1] from the breastplate. Her skirts trailed behind her as she crossed the corridors towards Shen An's personal apartments.

The maidservant in the garden mumbled for a minute before she said, "The General... The General is not in his chambers."

Song Ning's expression remained unchanged, "Is he at He Feng Yuan[2]?"

The maidservant hung her head, fearing to speak.

Song Ning passed the silk-wrapped huxing jing to the maidservant, "Since he is

not here, then pass this...”

Before she could finish her sentence, the maidservant in front of her raised her head and said in surprise, “General!”

Shen An entered the courtyard. The sky had not brightened and his silhouette was framed by the faint yellow light emitted by the few lanterns that hung in the courtyard. She heard his voice come from behind her, strong and cold, “what are you doing here?”

She turned around and stood straight, her gaze sweeping his form from head to toe, and laughed shortly. She handed him the cloth-wrapped item, “Nothing much. I heard that you will be going into battle, so I came to bring you this huxing jing that is made of pine green stone. This huxing jing is much stronger than normal ones and have saved my life many times. Since I will never go into battle again, do take this along with you and try it out.”

He frowned and looked at her, “I heard that this is your treasure that is given to you by your brother.”

Song Ning looked up, “Eh – You’ve also heard of that? It can be said to be a treasure but only if it can protect its wearer’s life. If it can’t protect someone’s life, then it is nothing. By loaning it to you, I don’t mean for you to owe me any favours. You said it well, we should each keep out of each other’s way. But as I may have taken on your name, if you die in battle, then the responsibility for your entire Shen household will fall on me – that is too tiring. Each should bear his own responsibility. Don’t you agree?”

She passed him the jade green huxing jing that looked like a spread out lotus leaf. As she turned to leave, he grabbed at her, “You can remarry.”

She looked down at his hand that held her sleeve before turning her gaze upwards to him and smiled, “What?”

He let go of her sleeve, “If I die in battle, you can remarry.”

She bowed her head and thought for a moment before replying, “Yes. That is true.” She raised her head again, her dimples deepened, “Then why don’t you just die on the battlefield and never return. Don’t ever return again.”

The maidservant at the side trembled from fear. Song Ning only laughed in

reply with a cold expression in her eyes.

--

Notes:

[1] “Huxin jing” usually describes a small circular shield that is worn at the chest area to protect the heart.

[2] This is the place where Liu Qiqi lives, which roughly translates to “The Garden of the Lotus Phoenix”.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-Drama](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [Yuan Hong](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

Tang Qi Gong Zi on Jun Fu/Ye Zhen and Mu Yen/Su Yu

Tangqi Gongzi on the Jun Fu/Ye Zhen and Mu Yen/Su Yu

[March 18, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [16 Comments](#)



曠
自
如
今

So feast your eyes (if you have not been trawling the net for the latest stills like I have) of our HXY OTP: Jun Fu and Mu Yen. My general sentiment towards the costumes can only be described as “meh~”. They’re not terribly exciting and I feel like there are some really questionable choices there (blue fringes!). Some pieces look decidedly uncomfortable and don’t fall nicely (frankly, the leather assemble KC is wearing in the picture above looks clunky as if made of cardboard).

In addition to giving her thoughts on Shen An and Song Ning’s doomed romance, she also commented on our OTP. Translation and my two cents are under the cut, let me know what you think. Be careful – it’s totally spoillerrific.

Special thanks to Peanuts for compiling the weibo posts.

Regarding the Little Princess (ie Ye Zhen / Jun Fu) and Mu Yen, ten thousand people wonder why would Mu Yen fall in love with her?

Mu Yen is the kind of person that is more reserved in matters of love. Qin Ziyang approached him with an ulterior motive from the beginning; as such, he naturally used her as much as he possibly can. Whereas the Little Princess’ love for him is clean and innocent – she respects and trusts him; her love for him is the kind that characterized by a willingness to give. He knows this and understands how precious this kind of feelings are. And that is why he loves the Little Princess.

So what is this willingness to give? There is a scene I wrote where the Little Princess wanted to give Mu Yen a present. But she didn’t know what he liked. So she took out of her belongings that she had with her to let him choose, for fear that what she gives him is not the best. I feel that this kind of love is very beautiful.

If there is no Little Princess, Mu Yen is unlikely to fall in love with anyone. He knows how precious it is to be able to love someone, and that is why he said that it is good thing to have a weak point.

Because the book is written from Jun Fu’s point of view, it’s so easy to be drawn into her feelings and dilemma – she’s dead and he’s not. And I really liked

how the themes explored earlier in the book are revisited in their finale, eg whether its better to have loved for a shorter period of time than expected, than never have loved at all (Thirteenth Moon) and whether it is better to forget than to remember both the love and the pain (Jiu Jiu), etc.

For quite a while after I read Tangqi's post, I was at odds because it sounded to me that Mu Yen only loved Jun Fu because Jun Fu loved him first and best (which is actually why I put off posting this for so long). I didn't really like that because it made me wonder if he loved her or if he loved how she made him feel. Because there's a distinction in some cases where in the latter case, he's more in love with his own vanity.

But then I reflected that Mu Yen actually sacrifices a lot for Jun Fu as well. In an early scene, she asked if he would marry a dead girl and he politely declined because he needs to continue his family line. But in the end, he married her anyway and did not take any secondary consorts or concubines. The epilogue actually opens with him standing at their tomb. She has already passed on for some time and have been interred. He will join her there once he passes on too. It then flashes back that the only way to extend her life was to give 15 years of his and the mystic cautioned him that he is a man with ambitious plans, so he needed to consider his decision carefully. But Mu Yen recalled the time where he found her after she was abducted, and he saw her with a dagger poised at her chest, ready to die than to be captured, he realised then that he cannot live without her.

So here you have it: Mu Yen has the ambition of his father and the romantic soul of his mother. Another doomed combination if I have ever seen one. Because I have never heard of a romantic dictator – even Napoleon gave up Josephine in the end.

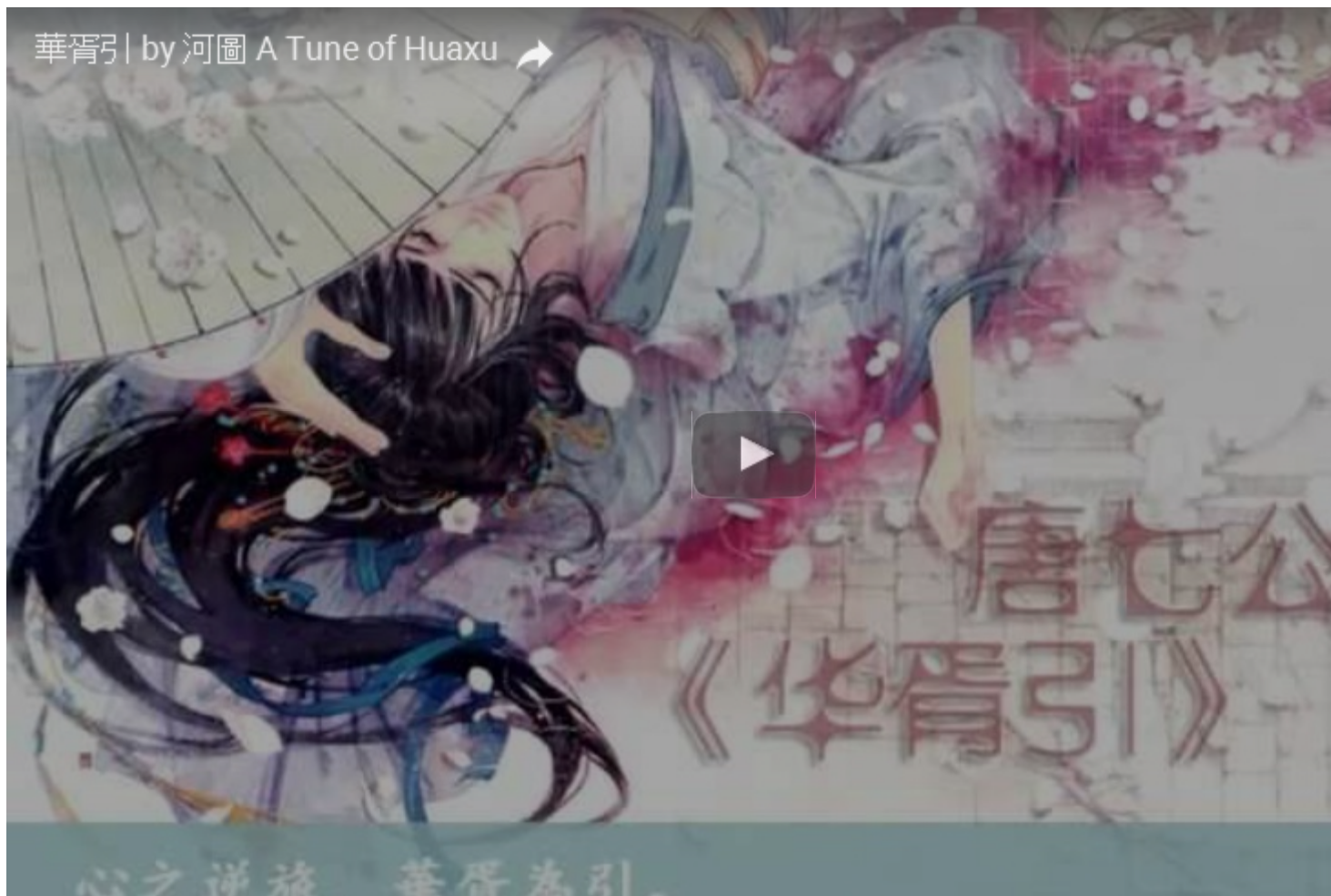
Jun Fu fell in love with Mu Yen because he saved her twice at their first meeting. But I think if you ask her why she continued loving Mu Yen, it is also because he is willing to reciprocate her love with his own unconditional love. And in the face of that, does it really matter who loved who first or who loved who more?

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-Drama](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Theme Song

Hua Xu Yin Original Theme Song by Tangqi Gongzi

[March 20, 2013](#) by [hui3r](#) [16 Comments](#)



[Edit 24/3/2013: summerfl7 (the poster of the Youtube video above has kindly cleaned up my draft translation below and set it as captions to the video above. So remember to turn on the captions for the English translation. It really adds to watching the video because she has painstakingly coordinated the pictures to reflect the lyrics as closely as possible. Thanks, S!

Edit 27/3/2013: summerfl7 has given me permission to adopt some of her proposed edits. Our versions are not exactly the same, but I am sure everyone would appreciate that this is really a matter of writing style and artistic preference. The important thing is that now everyone will get the gist of the poem and also a glimpse at the brilliance of Tangqi. :D]

Yes. It's more Hua Xu Yin and Tangqi Gongzi love. I noticed the other day that

the could tags on this blog is dominated by these two tags (their sizes are disproportionate to the rest really).

A couple of weeks ago, I found this piece of gem, *ie* the theme song Tangqi personally penned for Hua Xu Yin. It's musically gorgeous and the lyrics themselves are meaningful and must be shared with the rest of you guys. I think the version by He Tu posted above is the original and "official" version. There are lyrics floating around, and if you guys find any good ones, feel free to post them in the comments section here. I think it would be a waste if this is not the theme song for the drama.

My translation is below the cut.

This is the most difficult piece of translation that I have attempted so far. I am sure you guys would agree that translating prose is easier because we have more context to work with. But there's so much imagery in the lyrics (more so than in the original) that so much is lost in a literal and verbatim translation. So what I have done here is that I have included the original Chinese lyrics and if you have any suggestion how this can be improved, let me know and I would be happy to edit and share credit. I have also included the pinyin to the lyrics in case you guys are like me and like to sing along despite our inability to read Chinese characters fluently.

點一盞燈 聽一夜孤笛聲

Dian yi zhan deng ting yi ye gu di sheng

Light a lamp and listen to the the sound of the lonely flute all night 等一個人等
得流年三四輪

Deng yi ge ren deng de liu nian san si lun

Waiting for someone as the years flow by 風吹過重門深庭院幽冷

Feng chui guo zhong men shen ting yuan you leng

The wind blows by the heavy door, the inner courtyard is silent and cold 一紙紅
箋約下累世緣分

Yi zhi hong jian yue xia lei shi yuan fen

A fate of many lifetimes destined on red paper 史書翻過這一頁記憶封存

Shi shu fan guo zhe yi ye ji yi feng cun

Pages of the history turn but this page of memory is preserved 鴛鴦錦繪下這一段孤獨浮生

Yuan yang jin hui xia zhe yi duan gu du fu sheng

A pair of embroidered mandarin ducks drew a lonely floating life 一世長安的誓言誰還在等

Yi shi chang an de shi yan shei hai zai deng

Who is still waiting to fulfill the pledge of a lifetime of everlasting peace?

誰太認真

Shei tai ren zhen

Who has taken it too seriously?

夢一場她城下作畫

Meng yi chang ta cheng xia zuo hua

She paints by the city wall in a dream 描一幅山水人家

miao yi fu shan shui ren jia

Painted a landscape of the village

雪紛紛下 葬了千層塔

Xue fen fen xia zang le qian ceng ta

The snow falls heavily and buries the thousand storey pagoda 生死隔斷 寂寞天涯

Sheng si ge duan ji mo tian ya

The separation of life and death, loneliness at the ends of the world 夢一場她起弦風雅

Meng yi chang ta qi xian feng ya

The sound of her zither is elegant in the dream 奏一段白頭韶華

zuo yi duan bai tou shao hua

She played a measure of glorious youth to old age 雪紛紛下 葬了千層塔

Xue fen fen xia zang le qian ceng ta

The snow falls heavily and buried the thousand storey pagoda 似鏡中月華 他不知真假

Si jing zhong yue hua ta bu zhi zhen jia

Like moonlight in the mirror, he knows not true from false 煮一壺茶 折一枝白梅花

Zhu yi hu cha zhe yi zhi bai mei hua

Brew a pot of tea and pick a sprig of white plum blossom 撐一把青傘 冷冷雨落下

Cheng yi ba qing san ling ling yu luo xia

Hold up a green umbrella in the cold falling rain 香桃木開滿墳前惹風沙

Xiang tao mu kai man fen qian re feng sha

The fragrant peach tree blooms at the graveside in the wind blown sand 誰的思念
在石碑上發芽

Shei de si nian zai shi bei shang fa ya

Who's longing has sprouted on the gravestone?

夢一場她城下作畫

Meng yi chang ta cheng xia zuo hua

She paints by the city wall in a dream 描一幅山水人家

Miao yi fu shan shui ren jia

To paint a landscape of a village

雪紛紛下 葬了千層塔

Xue fen fen xia zang le qian ceng ta

The snow falls heavily and buries the thousand storey pagoda 生死隔斷 寂寞天涯

Sheng si ge duan ji mo tian ya

The separation of life and death, loneliness at the ends of the world 夢一場她起
弦風雅

Meng yi chang ta qi xian feng ya

The sound of her zither is elegant in the dream 奏一段白頭韶華

zuo yi duan bai tou shao hua

She played a measure of glorious youth to old age 雪紛紛下 葬了千層塔

Xue fen fen xia zang le qian ceng ta

The snow falls heavily and buries the thousand storey pagoda 似鏡中月華 他不知
真假

Si jing zhong yue hua ta bu zhi zhen jia

Like moonlight in the mirror, he knows not true from false 長安的誓言啊 史書未寫下

Chang an de shi yan a shi shu wei xie xia

The pledge of an everlasting peace was not recorded in history

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Ancient](#), [C-Drama](#), [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Summary Part 1: Song Ning's Story

Hua Xu Yin Summary Part 1 – Song Ning's Story (华胥引-浮生尽)

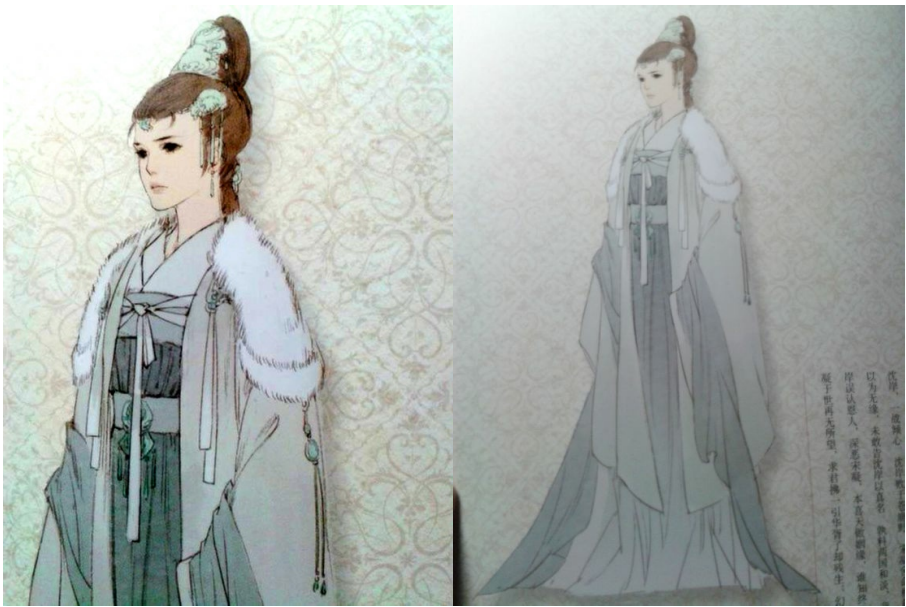
[January 23, 2014](#) by [peanuts](#) [15 Comments](#)



Since the drama adaptation will be rather different from the novel, I have decided to do five summaries, one main story and four sub-stories. I have also included pictures from the official pictorial album which I have bought. In addition, I have included translation of a fan-made MV so you can enjoy the story better with visual aid. Because I cannot read the Chinese subtitles and with my limited language skill, there will be errors and omissions in the translation.

The first sub-story is on Song Ning & Shen An. Before you start watching the fan-made MV, you should read the [summary in Koala's Playground](#) and [comment in Mookie's blog](#) to gain an understanding of this sub-story.

Pictorials



Song Ning is the sister of General Song Yan Zhi of Li country.



Song Ning followed her brother to the battlefields since young.



Shen An is the general of Jiang country.



He sat on a dark horse and held a long sword in his hand.



A lot of things are fated in life. Normally she did not have the habit to go for evening walk but on that day, she went for a walk around the garden and found a broken jade. After a closer inspection for a long time, she was convinced that was her jade which she had split into two. Suddenly a woman came to her and pointed at the jade and herself. When the woman saw her, the face became pale instantly.



Shen An with Liu Qi Qi, the mute girl.



Shen An said, “I recognise you, Song Ning.”

Fan-made MV Translation

This fan-made MV has Yuan Hong as Shen An and Liu Shi Shi as Song Ning.



君拂，你能帮我做出心中这个幻影么

0.02: Jun Fu, I want to have a dream. Do you know what kind of a dream I want to get?

I don't know so you've to tell me.

0.25: She starts to reminiscene. Whereas thru the hua xu tune, I get to see her past, scene by scene.

0.45: I know, I should come.

1.00: After I've recovered from my injury, I will come back and ask for your hand in marriage.

This is the general from your Jiang country. If you can heal him, you will be well rewarded by your king.

1.20: Actually you look like this.

No wonder all along I have never heard you speak. It is because you cannot speak.

1.30: You should know who should be the one who sit on the bed here tonight?

u said you will marry me.

riage was decreed by the king. He used the life of my fiance to force
rry you, so, how can I refuse?

don't intend to get anything from you so please don't request anything

ually the one who saved you.

who saved me is skilful at healing and is a mute. That is Qi Qi.

ou cannot accept Qi Qi so I also cannot accept you.

n, there is no way for you not to accept me.

t that there are things that Liu Qi Qi is not fit to get.

wo months later, Shen An leads the army for a battle.

n the batttle, you can remarry.

Then, it is best for you to die in the battlefield and don't come back.

2.40: In the middle of Sept, Shen An wins the battle and returns home.

Do you really want to kill me?

You caused Qi Qi's miscarriage. The blood on your hands are from my son's
life.

2.56: After nine months of marriage, Song Ni's right hand is disabled on this
night.

Shen An, you treat me this way, you are heartless.

Is this what you want to get? You want me to die?

3.13: She thinks her love is dying soon. In the past when she looked at Shen
An, she hoped he will get his heart's content. Now, when she looks at him, she
hopes to find his heart's discontent. But when his heart is discontent, she also
doesn't appear to be content.

I know you hate me so I thought you are not willing to give birth to him.

Why won't I give birth to him? My son is the heir to the family. In future, after
you died, he will inherit the family's estate.

Song Ning, no woman will want her husband to die in the battlefield.

Oh?

3.56: But the son died prematurely.

Ah Ning.

Why did my son die? Whereas your one is still alive? The one who you've with Liu Qi Qi is still alive.

4.13: In this life, I have never encountered something this sad.

Thereafter Song Ning becomes very ill.

Jun Fu, can you help me to create an illusaion of what is in my heart? Like a dream.

4.33: I will give you two days time to settle your stuff in the mortal world.

Two days later, I will help you to create a sweet dream.

5.22: Why don't you ever say something? Why don't you tell me you are the daughter of General Song?

I don't want to do this kind of thing anymore. If she is willing, we can give it a try. To die this way is definitely not worth it.

I want to go and look for Shen An. There is something I must do.

Ah Ning, I have been thinking about you.

I also have been thinking about you.

6.05: Song Ning, I've come to bring you out of this dream.

Song Ning, all these are just illusions created by me.

I wantto stay here. Since the real world Shen An doesn't even want me to be alive, so what is the point of me living?

Please torch and burn my corpse.

6.40: I want to save her but ultimately I can't save her.

Where is she?

Where is she?

Since you hate me so much, I have not died yet so how can you die before me?

Ah Ning, say something.

What do you want her to say?

7.14: You said Song Ning hates you but actually she has never hated you.

In this world, there is not many women who will love you like the way she loves you.

Ha, she loves me? How can you say like that?

Shen An, I will let you see how she was like in the past.

7.30: Quickly, go quickly.

I will rescue you. Even if I die, I will also save you.

Have you seen a Song Ning who behaves like this?

I don't believe what you have just let me see.

7.59: Shen An, whether this is real or not, your heart shall know best.

Ah Ning. Before she died, did she want to say anything to me?

No, not even one word.

She expects nothing more from you.

8.25: Not long after this incident, Li and Jiang countries go to war again.

In this war, he should be able to win big but don't know why he loses the war and is killed.

8.45: Hubby, I give Ah Ning to you. Please take good care of her and yourself.

When he is buried, the army troops notice that he has a small flowery ornament with ashes inside.

If Song Ning is still alive in this world, Shen An will not die.

In this world, there is only a person who will love and rescue him with her life.

Unfortunately, she died too early.

Probably because Song Ning has died, so he also dies.

I don't believe. Do you believe?

Below is another fan-made MV with Hu Ge as Shen An.



In conclusion, you can read [Hui3r's scene translation](#), [Hui3r's review](#) and [Mookie's review](#) on this sub-story. If you can understand Mandarin, you can listen to the [radio drama](#).

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Summary Part 2: Ying Ge's Story

Hua Xu Yin Summary Part 2 – Ying Ge's Story (华胥引-十三月)

[February 6, 2014](#) by [peanuts](#) [30 Comments](#)



This is my favourite sub-story. This is also the story with the most fan-made MVs so they confirmed my good taste, lol. What can I say except fate can work for you but it can also work against you. This story is really sad yet I can see silver lining because they met each other and got to spend the best parts of their short but sweet life together. It somehow reflects the fate of the main protagonists of the novel but with a difference.

I am not sure I agree with Rong Yuan's unilateral decision to die alone and not spend the rest of his remaining life with his loved one. He may perceive what he has done are all for her own good but what did she think? This story is so much more touching because their ending is inevitable but it is by no means due to their character flaws like the other three sub-stories. Rong Yuan is also a favourite male lead with many readers as he is protective and devoted. On the other hand, his nephew Rong Xun is the most hated character in the novel, even worse than Shen An. Thus, I don't want to read an epilogue from his point of view.

Summary

Jun Fu and Mu Yan went to the country Zheng to look for Rong Yuan's wife Shi San Yue (who is actually called Ying Ge). Instead Jun Fu found her sister Jin Que. She asked for the Hua Xu dream, where she killed her husband Rong Xun because she felt they were the one who contributed to the death of her sister Ying Ge. She was very remorseful so she killed him then committed suicide and died in the dream. Later, Jun Fu met Ying Ge and noticed that she looked exactly like Jin Que. She was curious so she went into Ying Ge's dream with Mu Yan.

When Ying Ge was young, her family was very poor so she was adopted by Rong Xun to be trained as an assassin to work for him. Ying Ge loved Rong Xun but he just treated her as a tool to accomplish his mission. After Ying Ge's grandma passed away, he fetched Ying Ge's little sister Jin Que to live with them. He felt she was the epitome of a true lady so he treated her very well and loved her. During Rong Xun's birthday, Ying Ge rushed back to give him a present. However, she found out Rong Xun liked her sister so she was very heart-broken. When Ying Ge and her little sister were both injured, he only cared about her sister.

Later, Rong Xun's uncle Rong Yuan who was the duke/king was interested in Jin Que. Rong Yuan made Ying Ge went through a painful skin surgery to get rid of her injury scars and entered the palace as Jin Que. Thus, Ying Ge completely gave up on Rong Xun since "he doesn't like me, I also don't like him." After living in the palace, she tried to find opportunity to escape to live her own carefree life. However, Rong Yuan treated her very well so she fell in love with him. Once, Rong Yuan tried to test her by creating a chance for her to escape but she did not take it.

Thus, they felt deeply in love and had a happy and blissful life for three years. Later Rong Yuan was injured by a giant snow leopard while protecting Ying Ge. As a result, Rong Yuan was poisoned and will die as he could not be healed. When he found out that Ying Ge was not Jin Que, he imprisoned her up in the mountain for lying to him. At the same time, he declared to the world that Ying Ge has passed away due to illness. Later, Rong Yuan deliberately got Rong Xun to seize the throne. Hence, Rong Xun became the new king, Rong Yuan abdicated and passed away half a year later. After 3 years of imprisonment, Ying Ge did not believe Rong Yuan has died so she came down from the mountain to look

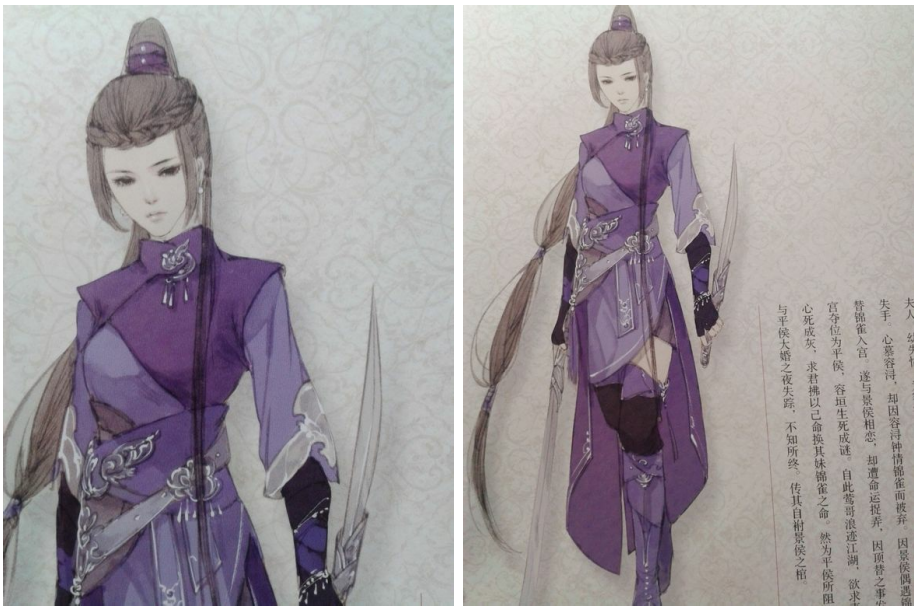
everywhere for him.

Through the Hua Xu dream, Ying Ge learns about the extent of Rong Yuan's love for her. He felt that she was a strong and good woman who was worthy of his love. She also finds out that he knew all along she was not Jin Que as Rong Xun has switched the twin identities. That means Rong Yuan's supposed anger over the deception was play-acting. When he found out he would be dying, he could not bear to part with Ying Ge. However, he knew after he died, she will commit suicide to be with him. Thus, he pretended to be angry with the deception and sent her away into imprisonment for 10 years. He hoped after 10 years she would have her freedom and would already forgotten about him by then.

Ying Ge find outs her sister Jin Que and Rong Xun were unhappy after Jin Que found out about Ying Ge's past love for Rong Xun and she was the interloper. After marrying off Ying Ge to Rong Yuan, Rong Xun realised he actually loved Ying Ge. Knowing that Rong Yuan has died, Ying Ge does not want to life anymore. She tells Jun Fu her biggest wish is to be with her husband forever in death. Thus, she offers up her body as a replacement for Jin Que who has died earlier in the Hua Xu dream. Rong Xun also wants to save Jin Que but when he learns that her resurrection will be at the cost of Ying Ge's life, in the end he choses to stop the procedure. Because of his intervention, Ying Ge temporarily loses her memories and thinks Rong Xun is Rong Yuan.

Rong Xun can live with that and is going to marry her. However a few days later, Jun Fu hears the bride has disappeared on the wedding day. She knows Ying Ge must have regained her memories and there is no way she will marry Rong Xun. She must have gone to die beside Rong Yuan. Indeed Ying Ge, sneaks into his royal tomb and kills herself lying beside him in the tomb. There is no way for Rong Xun to find her despite being the king now as the former king's tomb is inviolate so Ying Ge chooses the only place in the world Rong Xun can never find her, where she can be with Rong Yuan forever. Jun Fu thinks she is happy and is happy for her end.

Pictorials



Ying Ge who Rong Xun changed the name to Shi San Yue after she became an assassin.



After Ying Ge married Rong Yuan, he bestowed the title Lady Purple Moon to her.



Rong Yuan is the ruler of the country Zheng and is also known as Jing Hou. He is a handsome man. He met Ying Ge when he was 25 years old.



Rong Xun is the nephew of Rong Yuan and became the ruler after he siezed power. He and Rong Yuan are actually quite close in age.



Jin Que is the little twin sister of Ying Ge and married Rong Xun.



The contrast between the twin sisters, a cold assassin and a demure lady?



The faceless showdown between Shi San Yue and Rong Xun in the Hua Xu dream?



The sad and touching love story between Ying Ge and Rong Yuan.

Fan-made MV Translation

All the fan-made MVs below has Hu Ge as Rong Yuan, Yuan Hong as Rong Xun and Liu Shi Shi as Ying Ge as well as Jin Que. A big thank you to cloudandsea who has worked hard to translate this MV.

《九州华胥引》十三月 -刘诗诗 & 胡歌 ➡



他本来可以直接押上那把刀，却非要她去换什么银票

0.33: When Ying Ge was young, she was rescued by Rong Xun.

0.36: Ying Ge, your name is too alluring. From now on, you shall be called Shi San Yue.

0.40: I have killed him...

You have done well.

I am very scared. I am scared of being an assassin. I am scared of killing people.

Yue Niang, please become the most outstanding assassin for the Rong Family.

0.50: I will become the best assassin... for you.

0.54: When Ying Ge was 19, her ailing grandma passed away. She was unable to rush back to see her grandma for one last time as she was executing a mission. Rong Xun allowed her to fetch her only younger sister back.

0.58: Grandma said she wanted to see you before she died.

1.02: I always thought her name is Yan Wu (note: there is a chinese phrase called Ying Ge Yan Wu). Didn't expect her to be called Jin Que.

1.10: The 7th year of Jing Hou. Spring. Flowers blooming.



The 20 years old Ying Ge has become the best assassin.

She spent her youth and the best time of her life drenched in blood.

However, every action with the sword gives off an eerie chill.

Compared to Jin Que who is adored by everyone, there is an obvious

sunflower blooming under the sunlight. Pretty and clean.

Rong Xun's 24th birthday is on 17th April. Ying Ge wanted to return to Cheng to give him a pottery that she has made as his birthday gift.

On the 15th April. After days of travelling without sleep, Ying Ge finally reached the destination.

She just stepped into the Rong mansion, but she already couldn't wait to go to Rong Xun's room to show him his gift. But all she saw was Rong Xun and

He abandoned her just like that, without even bothering to tell her.

Ever since he saved her in that cold winter night, she has given herself to him.

He only treated her as another person he is in control of, someone belonging to him. But he didn't know about Ying Ge's love for him. One and only.

2.04: In September, the royal family went hunting. Jin Que lost her way and saved Duke Rong Yuan's snow cub. The next day, the snow cub, wrapped in bandages, was carried by the court servant back to the palace. Jin Que caught Duke Rong Yuan's attention and he hinted Rong Xun to send her to the palace.

2.13: That night, Ying Ge received a mission letter written by Rong Xun, for the first time.

"Substitute Jin Que to enter the palace."

2.22: My lord, if you can attack faster than me, not only will I follow the troublesome marriage customs, I will also not mind sharing a bed. I will listen to everything you say.

2.29: I have won the bet.

2.38: I have never expected that this day will come, that you will hold your

sword against my neck.

Rong Xun, I cannot kill you. You have saved me and my family. Your kindness to us, I will never dare to forget. But you have asked me to do such a thing... to replace Jin Que to enter the palace and marry your uncle. Just because you cannot bear Jin Que to leave you.

3.01: Tonight, you shall attend to me to change my attire.

Scared? If you are scared, then go and sleep la.

Since we are going to do this one day, then let that day come faster. My lord, don't you agree with me?

3.27: Month of winter. Ying Ge accompanied Yi He and her mother to pay respects to their ancestors. On the way there, a group of people attacked them. Ying Ge carried Yi He to the cliff and jumped down from the cliff. It was not steep and Ying Ge used a strap to hold the tree twigs when falling to reduce the impact. And so when she fell, she only broke her right leg.

3.32: How did you get injured? Is it painful? If you are in pain then just scream it out.

Who taught you to be like this? Your leg is broken and you do not make any noise. You are in pain and yet you are enduring it all by yourself.

Jin Que, just cry it out.

It's okay. I'm here.

3.58: You have stayed in the palace for 3 months. Are you bored? I will bring you out for a walk tomorrow.

4.07: Where do you want to go?

Since my lord has asked me to make a choice... then let's go to Bi Fu Lou.

4.15: If you still want to use your wife as a bet, then so be it.

I won't let you make a loss. This round, I will add 300,000 gold.

Pass this sword to the boss, and he will exchange it for 300,000 gold.

4.28: He could have exchanged the sword for money by himself. Why did he insist on her going to change it? Maybe Rong Yuan wanted to give an

opportunity for Ying Ge to escape.

4.50: He gave her an opportunity to escape, but at the same time, he hoped that she wouldn't. Only he will know how painful it was when she left. It is like a hopeless bet.

5.10: There were too many people so I stayed upstairs to watch you.

5.15: I really like you. No matter what you do, I will still like you. Even if you decide to leave me.

5.37: End of the year. Rong Xun marries Jin Que. Of course, the Jin Que now is not Jin Que, but Ying Ge, Shi San Yue.

5.51: Why have you invited me to meet you here?

I have disappointed you.

Yes, you have. You and Jin Que, have let me down.

It is good that you hate me, since I am the one who have done you wrong.

6.04: To kill an assassin is easy, but to move her is difficult. They lived precariously, like one who is walking on a tightrope on top of a cliff. All they have are a strong sense of danger with no security.

I know how to touch an assassin's soul – hand your life over to her.

6.09: I don't know if Rong Yuan knew that. On New Year's eve, when the giant snow leopard attempted to pounce on Ying Ge, Rong Yuan's first reaction was to pull Ying Ge behind him to protect her. The sharp claws of the leopard scratched his left arm.

The leopard's claw is poisonous.

At this kind of moment, just stand behind me.

If you die, I will come and accompany you.

What did you say the previous time?

Eat your medicine first, it's not hot anymore.

I will wait for you to recover, so get well quickly.

6.44: The 10th year of Jing Hou. Ying Ge was exposed for impersonating Jin

Que. Rong Yuan was extremely angry and banished Ying Ge to repent over her mistakes at Ting Hua Mountain for 10 years, and not allowed to leave. For the first two months she was there, she thought of many ways and means to break the formation and leave the mountain. She was covered all over with cuts and bruises when she finally managed to leave the forest. Without taking any rest, she rushed back to the palace, only to receive news of her death.

6.51: You told me that you were different from them. Have you forgotten? Actually you knew that I wasn't Jin Que all along, right? You found such a way to imprison me by keeping me in captivity just because you are sick of me, right? Why did I even believe you? How can I just believe you just like that?

Those who didn't manage to send the Lady back to the mountain shall be executed.

That was the last time they met.

7.26: For three years, Ying Ge never attempted to escape anymore. And for three years, there was no news of the world outside.

7.32: My Lady, you have contain all your hatred towards my Lord for all these years... But he has already passed away two years ago. Towards the dead, let go of all the hatred. His only wish was for you to continue living happily.

What did you say just now...? Rong Yuan, what happened to him?

7.50: I heard that you can use your magic powers to let the mortals see what they cannot see. Can you help me?

What do you want to know?

I want to know why my husband left me, and where is he now?

8.01: We have always seen one side of a story, but not the other side. And finally, we can see it clearly now. Rong Yuan's story started the moment he saw Ying Ge. Under the warm candle lights, Ying Ge's cold eyes send chills to one's spine.

So Jin Que is not Jin Que, but Ying Ge, the assassin.

Today, pretend that I have never heard of this. You mentioned that Rong Xun removed the scars on her body. How did he do that?

Change skin.

He thought, she must have been in extreme pain at that time.

He didn't fall in love with her at first sight. From pity to love, it took three days for him to fall in love. For those who are destined to be in love, one day of separation feels so long, not to mention three days.

She should be living happily without worries. A girl who is ignorant about the world's dark side. A girl who he can dote on, precious.

9.01: Rong Yuan was born prematurely and was diagnosed with all types of illnesses since young. He recovered when he was treated by a renowned physician, Bai Li Yue.

After many years, they met again. Immediately, the first thing Bai Li Yue asked was, "Your Lord, have you suffered from any poison this year?"

How much longer can I still live?

In three more months, My Lord, you will start to vomit blood. In a year time... you will die of over-bleeding.

9.25: He thought, when he died, there was only two route for her – to bury herself with him or to die of loneliness in the palace. If she got to choose, based on her character, she will definitely slit her wrist and die with him.

If she saw his indecisiveness that night, would she be a bit happier and better?

9.43: 10 days later, on the basis of deceiving the emperor, he banished Ying Ge to Ting Hua Mountain to reflect. The next day, he announced to the world that she has died of illness.

For ten years, she will lose contact with the world.

Ten years later, she will forget him.

Even though her youth would be gone by then, but she will be free to live the kind of life she wanted.

10.07: Soon, Rong Xun broke his way into the palace. This incident happened fast and quiet because Rong Yuan never intended to resist.

I gave her to you in full, but why did you break her into pieces?

Even if she is broken, she is broken under my embrace.

10.27: Later, Rong Yuan stepped down and Rong Xun ascended to the throne. Rong Yuan hid himself in Shan Xing Palace to meditate.

A year later, that day came. Bai Li Yue's words came true.

10.45: No! I don't want you to die!

10.50: This is the whole story. Ying Ge has already guess it somehow, but she refused to believe it.

Looking back at those days, it felt as if it happened very long ago, and untouchable.

Rong Yuan's life has been too short, but he insisted in using his way to protect her.

In the world of troubled times, to be able to see such true love from the dark palace shows me that even though life has reached the bottom pit, you can still resist against it and grow your own roots.

This year, I am 26 years old. But I feel that my life have been really good, and really long. That's nothing for me to look back anymore.

For my last wish, I would like to request you to bury me together with my husband.

Since this is my favourite sub-story, how can I not translate a fan-made MV? But I've made use of a lot of cloudandsea's translation since they are rather similar. Below is one of my favourite MV with dubbing since I cannot read:(

【配音】《九州华胥引》十三月 -刘诗诗 & 胡歌 ➡



0.04: Ying Ge is your real name?

0.34: Ying Ge, your name is too alluring. From now on, you shall be called Shi San Yue.

What is the difference between real name and nick name since from the age of eleven, nobody calls me by this name anymore?

Yue Niang, please become the most outstanding assassin of the Rong Family for me.

0.47: The 10th year of Jing Hou, the 20 years old Ying Ge has become the best assassin of the family.

A girl spent her youth and the best time of her life drenched in blood.

Every move, every action with the sword gives off an eerie chill.

1.01: When Ying Ge was 19 years old, her ailing grandma passed away. She was unable to rush back to see her grandma for the last time as she was executing a mission. When she returned from her mission, Rong Xun already fetched her only younger sister back to live with them.

Rong Xun's 24th birthday is on 17th April. Ying Ge After 7 days of travelling

sleep, Ying Ge rushed back to give him his birthday gift. When she entered the Rong mansion, she already couldn't wait to run to Rong Xun's room to show him his gift. But all she saw was her little sister Jin Que going into Rong Xun's study room.

There is something, that the more effort you use, the more difficult to achieve. Just like Ying Ge's romance.

Rong Xun abandoned her just like that, without even bothering to inform her.

That night, Ying Ge received a mission letter exclusively used by Rong Xun.

"Substitute Jin Que to enter the palace."

I have never expected that this day will come, that you will hold your sword against my neck.

Rong Xun, I cannot kill you. You have saved me and my family. Your kindness to me, I will never dare to forget. But you have asked me to replace Jin Que to enter the palace and marry your uncle. Kill me so I can be free.

I don't want your life. Just substitute Jin Que and enter the palace will be the last mission you need to do for me. Then you are free.

Rong Xun, do you think that an assassin doesn't have a heart? You protect Jin Que but sacrifice me just because I am an assassin.

3.08: Scared? If you are scared, then go and sleep la.

If you let me do it myself, then I won't be scared.

Since we are going to do this one day, then let that day come faster.

3.35: Month of winter. Ying Ge accompanied Yi He to pay respects to their ancestors. On the way there, a group of people attacked them. Ying Ge and Yi He fell down the cliff.

3.58: Is it painful?

Not really.....

Who taught you to be like this? Your leg is broken and you do not make any noise. You are in pain and yet you are enduring it all by yourself.

Jin Que, just cry it out.

It's okay. I'm here.

4.24: You have stayed in the palace for 3 months. Are you bored? I will bring you out for a walk tomorrow. Where do you want to go?

Since my lord has asked me to make a choice... then let's go to Bi Fu Lou.

Bi Fu Lou is a famous gambling place in the city.

Pass this sword to the boss, and he will exchange it for 300,000 gold.

Maybe Rong Yuan wanted to give an opportunity for Ying Ge to escape. He could have exchanged the sword for money by himself. Why did he insist on her going to change it?

Only he will know how painful it will be to part with her. It is just like a hopeless bet. It is just like Rong Yuan's current mood.

5.03: Where did you go?

There were too many people so I stayed upstairs to watch you.

I don't know if Ying Ge has fallen in love with Rong Yuan. All I know is that she has personally given up this opportunity to escape.

5.15: End of the year. Rong Xun got married. Of course, with the real Jin Que.

Why have you asked me to meet you here?

Ying Ge.....

My lord.....you got the wrong person. I am not Ying Ge. The person you married today is the one called Ying Ge.

Do you hate me? I have let you down.

Yes, you have let me down. You and Jin Que, have let me down.

Since I have let you down, hating me is also good.

6.02: To kill an assassin is easy, but to move her is difficult. In order to touch an assassin's soul, all you need to do is hand your life over to her. I don't know if Rong Yuan knew that. On New Year's eve, when the giant snow leopard attempted to pounce on Ying Ge, Rong Yuan's first reaction was to pull Ying Ge

behind him to protect her.

During this kind of moment, all you need to do is just stand behind me.

If you die, I will come and accompany you.

Ying Ge and Rong Yuan live happily together for three years. In the second year, she was bestowed the title 'Lady ???

6.43: The 10th year of Jing Hou. Ying Ge was exposed for impersonating Jin Que. Rong Yuan was extremely angry and banished Ying Ge to repent over her mistakes at Ting Hua Mountain for 10 years, and not allowed to leave. With injuries, she walked step by step to confront him.

You told me that you were different from them. Have you forgotten? Actually you knew that I wasn't Jin Que all along, right? You found such a way to imprison me by keeping me in captivity just because you are sick of me, right? Why did I even believe you? How can I just believe you just like that?

Send the lady back. Those who didn't manage to send her back shall be executed.

That was the last time they met.

7.24: For three years, Ying Ge never attempted to escape anymore. And for three years, there was no news of the world outside.

7.32: Two years ago, my lord has passed away. Towards the dead, let go of all the hatred la.

7.50: Ying Ge.....

I want to use your magic powers to see what the mortals cannot see.

What do you want to know?

I want to know why my husband left me, and where is he now?

We have always seen one side of a story, but not the other side. And finally, we can see it clearly now. Rong Yuan's story started the moment he saw Ying Ge.

8.29: Jin Que is not Jin Que, but Ying Ge, the assassin Shi San Yue.

Today, pretend that I have never heard of this. You mentioned that Rong Xun removed the scars on her body. How did he do that?

Change skin.

He thought, she must have been in extreme pain at that time.

He thought, those who gave her up are so stupid. But he gave her up which has benefited himself.

He didn't fall in love with her at first sight. From pity to love, it took three days for him to fall in love. For those who are destined to be in love, one day of separation feels so long.

9.07: When he has everything settled but he has forgotten about fate.

How much longer can I still live?

In three more months, My Lord, you will start to vomit blood. In a year time... you will die of over-bleeding.

9.23: 10 days later, on the basis of deceiving the emperor, he banished Ying Ge to Ting Hua Mountain to reflect.

Not long after, Rong Xun broke his way into the palace. This incident happened very fast and very quiet.

I gave her to you in full, but why did you break her into pieces?

Even if she is broken, she is broken under my embrace.

9.50: A year later, cherry trees blossom throughout the mountain. Rong Yuan really passed away.

This is the whole story. Ying Ge has already guess it somehow, but she refused to believe it.

Looking back at those days, it felt as if it happened very long ago, and untouchable.

Rong Yuan's life has been too short, but he insisted in using his way to protect her, his own special kind of love.

10.23: In the vast land, there are so many palaces and in those palaces buried so many women's youth and sadness.

Until I get to witness this love story.

After my death, I would like to bury together with my husband.

I remember this is her last wish.

The following fan-made MVs also have that trio as leads:

http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/PhA-mY_1AKc/

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s47VhUNkHts>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LzJfQQeVQ4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opj6Wd4cOtc>

If you can understand Mandarin, you can listen to the [radio drama](#).

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Summary Part 3: Jiu Jiu's Story

Hua Xu Yin Summary Part 3 – Jiu Jiu's Story (华胥引-杯中雪)

[June 21, 2015](#) by [peanuts](#) [4 Comments](#)



This is another super angst sub-story in the novel so get ready some tissues. You need to pay more attention to this story because you will not get to watch it in the drama. I think it has been omitted because of the perceived incestuous nature of the story. This is Hui3r's favourite sub-story and her parting gift to you as hamster has taken over the translation.

As for me, I am only okay with it because I am annoyed with Jiu Jiu. She chose not to believe in Gongyi Fei when he told him everything. She also decided to unilaterally make the sacrifice for him, but never bothered to consult him or find out more information. Many interpreted that as her determination to kill herself. She did not know how to appreciate and cherish Gongyi Fei the first time round. But when given the chance again, Gongyi Fei has already forgotten about her. Hence, everything ended in tragedy due to fate as well as her personal shortcomings. Indeed, I feel sad for her but I feel even sadder for Gongyi Fei who has to live with what could have been.

Summary

Jiu Jiu and Gongyi Fei got married. On the night of the marriage, she revealed that she was his sister. The background of the story was that Gongyi Fei had a twin sister, who was abandoned/killed because that's the practice with twins. The head of the family has to 'bond' with this mythical guardian creature through a blood bond. If a head of family has a twin, the twin can use her blood to control the guardian, even if she was not the head of the family because they have exactly the same blood. Thus Jiu Jiu came back for revenge, and explained how her own adopted father told her she was Gongyi Xun.

Hence Jiu Jiu did a lot of things to destroy the Gongyi family. It was later revealed that Gongyi Fei also wanted to destroy the family anyway because the Gongyi family was King Chen's secret army/assassin and Gongyi Fei wanted to move the family out of that role. He wanted to destroy the family in order for them to have a new beginning.

Gongyi Fei's wife was his younger cousin. Through Jiu Jiu's manipulation (she tricked them into getting caught in the same bed by their elders), tensions between the uncles' families escalated and they started to fight. Apparently she needed him to have a second wife to have a child because she could not have a child herself as they never consummated the marriage. If she was childless for too long, they can force Gongyi Fei to divorce her for being barren.

Jiu Jiu tried to summon the guardian to destroy everyone at once but failed. That was when she realised that she was not Gongyi Fei's long lost sibling because she could not summon the guardian with her blood, only Gongyi Fei could. If she was his twin sister, she should be able to because they have the same blood. She died trying to protect Gongyi Fei from the guardian (although Gongyi Fei after that revealed to her sadly that the guardian would never have hurt its own master).

After Jiu Jiu died, unbeknownst to Gongyi Fei, Jiu Jiu had arranged for the Prince of Chen (ie Mu Yan) to take her spirit to be cultivated into a 'Mei' (which is the same being that Mu Yan's mother Murong An was). Don't even ask me how this works – but I think essentially, they sealed her spirit into a vessel. They also sealed her memories because they thought that she and Gongyi Fei were siblings and that kind of taboo love was too much to bear.

When they delivered her to Gongyi Fei, he did not remember her because his second wife had him drink a potion that made him forget the painful memories so both of them had their memories repressed. Because she was a ‘Mei’ without her memories, she did not know why she existed and she behaved strangely in their eyes. There were a lot of repressed feelings between them, aside from repressed memories like the part where A’Fu recounted that Jiu Jiu (when she has become Gongyi Xun) knew Gong Yi Fei wanted some scorebook or other, but the other party wanted her hand in marriage as exchange so she accepted. Gongyi Fei got so angry when he found out.

After A’Fu found out the whole story from Jiu Jiu’s sealed memories, she went to get the antidote to the forgetting potion Gongyi Fei drank. She wanted to give them a happy ending where Gongyi Fei would remember and they could be happy together but by the time A’Fu got back and went to see Gongyi Fei, she found out from Gongyi Fei that his ‘sister’ had already died. Apparently, the King of Chen ordered the Gongyi family to assassinate a general from the Jiang country and Gongyi Fei was the only one who was capable of doing it. However Jiu Jiu snuck off to replace him in completing the mission. Unfortunately, she was killed in the process and her body was hung from the city walls for three days. A’Fu was sad and left the antidote with Gongyi Fei. The next thing we know, there’s a scene where Gongyi Fei talked to a wooden carving and recounted his and Jiu Jiu’s first meeting. It is very heartbreaking to hear that. A’Fu realised that he drank the antidote and now remembered Jiu Jiu.

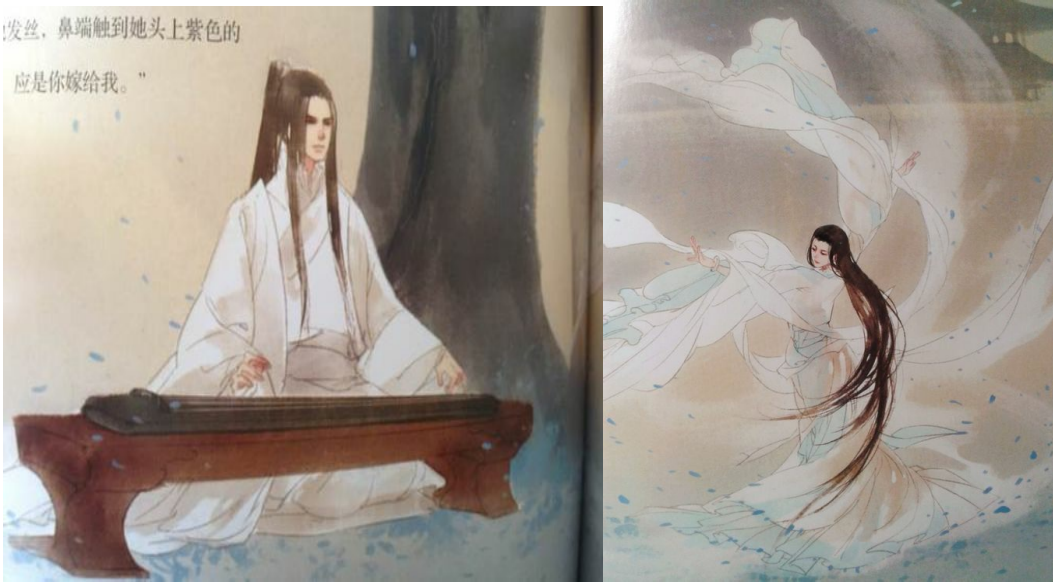
Pictorials



Qing Jiu Jiu



Gong Yi Fei





Fan-made MV Translation

Since this sub-story will not be featured in the drama, Hui3r had chosen one of the longest fan-made MV in the hope that you will get to know the full story. One of Hui3r’s favourite actor, Wallace Huo will be Gongyi Fei, Liu Yi Fei will be Qing Jiu Jiu and Ivy Chen is Ah Fu.

【配音】《九州华胥引》杯中雪 - 刘亦菲&霍建华 ➔



0:06 I am Pei Zhong's Gongyi Fei. May I ask what is Miss' name?

0:16 Yong An's, Qing Jiu Jiu.

0:39 That was not a dream. That was a memory caught by the Hua Xu Yin. A memory belonging to someone who has passed away.

0:55 Who is this person who has already passed away?

1:26 A Fei... Wind has been killed by that crazy woman...

1:33 What happened?

1:36 This horse threw you off the other day. A horse that can't even recognize its own master... what is the use of keeping it?

1:47 Are you... Are you going to let her go just like that?

1:53 There is something wrong in her head... but you keep finding trouble with her.

2:04 There are really all kinds of unbelievable things in this big world. I am a 'Mei', and you are a dead person sustained by the Hua Xu Yin.

2:13 You want me to create a dream for you. But the price... is not something

fford.

ied 7 years ago... it took 5 years to make me a 'Mei', but my memories
n sealed in my eyes. Without these memories, I am nothing. I hear from
at I owed Ah Fei a lot in my past life, and my only wish is to be able to
. I don't know what is the price, but whatever it is that you wish for, I
y best to help you obtain it. And when you see my memories, please tell
ood things that have happened.

right. I can help you. I don't want anything in exchange.

ler Sister, I should not have come to such a place.

hich one do you like?

h... Master Gongyi has already bought this girl for 3,005 taels of gold.

,000 taels of gold for all three girls.

en't you... Aren't you here to bring me home?

4:04 Since you ran here to fight over girls with other people, then you must win the fight. What is it that I have thought you before? Pick one that you like the most. You don't need to return home tonight.

4:27 Miss Qing.

4:29 Master Gongyi is really refined.

4:37 Since we last parted at Mt Zhu, I only wished to get closer to Miss.

4:42 You wish to save my life once? I don't know how to swim. I will die if you do not save me.

5:00 I have never tricked anyone in my life. And you have not lied to me. If this is the case, come and marry me 10 days from now. Are you unwilling? Then your so-called admiration is nothing but useless nonsense. Yong An's Qing Jiu Jiu is not someone you can simply trifle with.

5:19 How can that be? I will come and marry you in 10 days time.

5:33 What are you doing here?

5:35 Who are you waiting for in this dead of the night?

5:37 I am not waiting for anyone.

5:39 Then this dance... was created for me? I want to see you dance, Jiu Jiu. The dance earlier was for other people. But could you dance for me alone tonight?

5:50 You are right. I have practiced so hard all this time for the purpose of dancing for you. In fact, I do not like dancing at all. You should remember all these dance moves on my behalf.

6:04 Tonight is the happiest night of my life. In the future, when I reminisce about tonight, I will surely still be happy.

6:11 Your happiest night... should be the night you marry me.

6:38 Even though I love your simple elegance, you didn't need to suit me by dressing up so plainly on our wedding day.

6:48 Ah Fei... Are you planning to share your wedding wine with your own sister?

6:59 Surely you have not forgotten that you had a twin sister, as I have never forgotten that I have a younger brother who shares my bloodline. The same blood runs in our veins; we are each other's closest relation.

7:17 You do not believe me? Having twins is taboo in the Gongyi clan. 18 years ago... I was the one that was forsaken. I survived despite the odds is for today... to return here. Other than to marry you, I could not think of another way to legitimately return to this Gongyi clan, to legitimately reclaim my inheritance.

7:44 You said that you did not know how to swim, and if I did not save you, then you would surely die.

7:48 That was a lie.

7:49 You said you practiced your dance very hard, for the sole purpose of dancing for me.

7:55 That was also a lie.

7:58 You said that was the happiest night of your life.

8:00 That was also a lie.

8:04 I grew up in a brothel. In a brothel – you only get to eat if you dance well. If you dance badly, then you will have to go hungry. At that time, I always had to finish my chores on an empty stomach. I always hated dancing, but except by dancing, I had no way of escaping that life.

When I was 6 years old, all I could think of was how to be an entertainer, so that I can rely on my skills to support myself. When you were 6, what were you thinking of? Ah Fei – A princess' daughter becoming an entertainer – isn't that unbelievable?

If my adopted father had not found me... perhaps you would have met me some brothel – and just like how you bought those prostitutes – used 3,005 taels of gold to buy my first night for your pleasure.

9:22 Don't speak any further. You would not allow me to wholly love you, nor would you allow me to wholly hate you. Jiu Jiu, you are really un-amusing this way.

9:57 From afar, her appearance is quite similar to me. Ah Fei – have you liked me to this extent?

10:09 You are right. I like you... to this extent. Isn't it quite revolting? You have made me miserable, but unable to restrain myself. Are you happy now? Jiu Jiu, even if you have made my life so miserable, whatever it is that you want, I will still stay by your side. If what you said is true, then I have owed you too much.

11:56 All of this... you were behind it. What is it that you want?

12:00 We cannot have children. Eventually, the elders will force you to take concubines. You need a child.

12:10 You never knew that... whatever it is that you want, I give it to you. It is not because you have persuaded me, but because I want you to have your heart's desire. This thing called Love... It is not something that you can give when you wish to... and take it back when you want to... Whatever it is that you want, I will give it to you. But from now on, Jiu Jiu, do not appear in front of me anymore.

13:50 This is correct... I have not recited a single word wrongly.

14:14 There are so many people who look alike in this world... why are you so

sure that you are my sister?

14:18 Surely you too wish to destroy this clan... it's just that you cannot bear to do it yourself.

14:58 I am sorry. When we return, divorce me.

15:01 You think that this would count as having repaid me? Other than running away, what else do you know to do?

15:39 Why don't you love me any longer? Don't you know that when I hear you say such words, I feel very upset?

15:47 Don't speak anymore. I will take you to the doctor.

15:54 The Gongyi clan's destiny has come to an end. Why does Miss want to exhaust your energies to summon the Guardian Beast?

16:04 This is the only way to end it.

16:09 But Master Gongyi will not forgive you.

16:12 Do you all think that my younger brother is too useless? The reason that he has not stopped me is because what I want to do is also what he wants to do. It is not that I do not know, but only that I can pretend not to know.

16:25 You say that I am heartless. Since it is destined that there must be bloodshed, isn't it better that I am to be the one to do it? There only needs to be one evil person. As it turns out that I am such a bad person. But it doesn't matter. I never thought I would live past this day.

16:43 There is nothing bad about you. Since you married into the Gongyi Clan, everything about you is good. The only thing bad about you is that you refuse to have a child with me. But I don't care about it at all!

16:53 My life... my life has been a joke. Abandoned by my parents, lied to by my adopted father, then went on to lie to other people and let myself... This snowfall came at the right time to cover up all OUR misunderstandings. I am really happy that you are still willing to coax me at this time. Ah Fei – Live well.

17:26 How do you see me? As your younger brother or... as a man?

18:15 Qing Jiu Jiu's death nearly ruined Gongyi Fei. Gongyi Shan had no other

choice but to seek out a drug to make him forget the past and Qing Jiu Jiu. If I can bring back the antidote, then all will be well.

19:00 Haven't you always wanted to know how Gongyi Xun saw you? Take this drug, and then you can go and ask her.

19:10 She has already passed away. She died 9 days ago.

19:18 How did it happen?

19:21 I received an important business offer. To assassinate Jiang state's prime minister. In this clan, nobody had this ability besides me. She was worried about me so she went in my stead. She ruined her own face and went to kill the prime minister without intending to come back alive. She did not leave a trace of evidence.

They hung her corpse outside the city gate exposed to the elements. There was nothing I could do. For the sake of the Chen state, I could not preserve her body. I could not even give her a proper funeral.

20:04 Are you regretting now? She has died! She died in such a pitiful manner. And all you can do is to regret?

20:16 If I had known she wanted to go to Jiang state, I would have stopped her.

20:23 You would never have known because you have stopped caring for her since a long time ago.

20:32 You are right – I have stopped caring for since a long time ago.

20:39 On the last day, she came to find me and said that she had once asked me to remember a dance for her. She asked me if I had already forgotten?

20:51 She could be headstrong at times, but had never behaved that way. I should have realized. But I only scolded her.

21:13 I didn't know what it is she was talking about. She asked me about the dance she performed that day. How could I have forgotten it? I can remember her every expression and gesture.

22:18 Sometimes, I would hate her for being my elder sister.

22:24 She told me that you hated her, that she was a burden. You let a lot of

things slide on account of her being mentally ill. She didn't know what was her purpose for living. She was tired.

22:48 She said... She said that?

22:56 At the root of it, you both have been tormented by Fate. You and Qing Jiu Jiu are both pitiful people.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 2.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Introduction and Chapter 2.1

[March 28, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [38 Comments](#)



Hi everyone. As Peanuts would be quick to point out, nobody knows me now so I must reintroduce myself. I am hui3r, the shadowy landlord of this blog who disappeared into Real Life for far too long. But now I am back, in bits. And I thank everyone for supporting this blog. And definitely to Peanuts for keeping it alive!

The C-Novel bug has once again bitten me, which led to my resurfacing (among other factors). After much discussion with Peanuts (and much wiffy-waffing around on my part), I have decided to continue translating Hua Xu Yin by Tang Qi Gong Zi. As some of you might know, I had originally translated some bits and pieces and [Chenguang](#) had picked up the translating project. However, seeing that she had been on hiatus for quite a while and I have not received any response from her regarding this project, I am now continuing this project alone.

Peanuts has done a brilliant job so far of summarising the sub-stories for everyone's enjoyment. So what we have decided to do (again, after much discussion with Peanuts and wiffy-waffing around on my part) is to translate the main story which relates to Jun Fu and Mu Yen. We will link up with the sub-story

summaries and add scene translations where appropriate. We decided to this so that we can hopefully make faster progress on completing Jun Fu and Mu Yen's story first.

Introduction

The story so far...

*I did not grow up like a princess,
But I died like one.
I died in the early winter months,
Accompanied by the mournful song of Wei country:
Sinking stars and bright moon, my family is faraway,
Send me home when the plum blossoms fall.*

The prologue and chapter 1 focused on telling the folktale of how Ye Zhen, the Princess Wenchang, martyred herself to protect the dignity of the fallen State of Wei, and her childhood spent at Yanzong Temple. She first meets the masked Mu Yan during her time at Yanzong temple, when he saves her from a snakebite and again from assassins sent to kill him.

You can read the prologue and Chapter I at Chenguang's blog here:

[Prologue](#) | Chapter 1 – [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)



Ye Zhen, the Princess Wenchang – the youngest princess of the State of Wei





Su Yu, the heir to the Duke of Chen



Chapter 2 – Part I

After I died, Su Yu, the heir of the Duke of Chen, ordered that I should be given a funeral befitting a princess. The plan to send My Royal Father and Royal Mother to the capital city of Chen under custody was delayed by one day on account of my funeral.

On the day of my funeral, the royalty and nobility were requested to attend to pay their last respects and write their reflections thereafter. None of them dared to be absent. The remaining citizens of the Wei Capital crowded the streets along the route of the funeral procession; the crowd was so thick that one could not even cross from one side of the street to the other for a bowl of noodles.

Of course, I knew nothing of this at that time – I only found out later from Master Jun. When he received news of the siege on Wei, he had immediately set out with Jun Wei to rescue me. However, he had not expected that I would sacrifice myself to protect the dignity of my country. It was the day of my funeral when he finally arrived and I was already lying in my coffin, pitiful cries following in my wake as heavy snow fell from the skies.

“In the 68 years since the forming the of the State of Wei, I have never seen such an elaborate funeral procession in honour of a princess,” Master Jun said.

But I thought that the ceremony was not in honour of me; rather, it was a ceremony marking the death of a state; no ceremony is too elaborate for such an event.

Master Jun is a man of extraordinary talent; I just never expected that he was so talented that he could revive the dead. Of course, this went against the laws of nature – imagine, you expend a lot of effort to kill your enemy but he comes back alive for you to kill again, how would you feel? However, as this did indeed happen to me – to refute the fact would be to refute my existence.

It was a cold winter’s night when I was revived; I felt as if I had awoken from a deep sleep.

I recalled that I fell from the high city wall – modern medicine is truly miraculous to have been able to save me in such circumstances. Master Jun sat

opposite me, perusing a roll of ancient scripture while Jun Wei had dozed off against the table.

I raised my eyes and saw the white lotuses on my curtain around my bed. I asked, "Am I still alive?"

There was a moment of silence before Master Jun finally put down his book on the desk and asked, "Ah Zhen, is that you speaking?" The commotion roused Jun Wei from his sleep and raised his hand to rub his eyes.

I opened my mouth and croaked out a single word, "Yes."

Jun Wei's hand stilled in midair and he slowly looked towards me. He asked hesitantly, "Ah Zhen?"

I ignored him because Master Jun had already approached my bedside to check my breathing and pulse. After a while, he said, "the Pearl is truly a miraculous object. Are you hurting, Ah Zhen?"

I shook my head, "No."

He smiled sadly, "Such grievous injuries and yet you are not in pain. While I may have revived you, you are, nonetheless, dead. You will never feel pain again. I had acted without consulting you, but tell me: do you want to come back?"

I looked at him, smiled wanly and nodded my head, "I do."

This was not true resurrection; Ye Zhen was truly dead. You reap what you sow and this is the fruit of my actions.

According to the legends of the Nine Provinces, when a person dies, his soul wanders between Heaven and Earth before finally ceasing to exist. I had always thought that this was just a legend until I personally experienced death and realised that there might be some truth in the legend.

Three days after my burial, Jun Shifu snuck into the Royal Tombs in the dead of the night and brought my body back to Mount Junyu. At that time, my soul had yet to leave my body. He placed his Sect's holy relic, the brilliant Holy Pearl[1] in my broken body to prevent my soul from leaving. While I can move and think, my body is still that of a dead person's. It will never grow or age, I did not breath, I did not have any sense of smell or taste, I did not need to eat to live, nor did I

feel any pain. I no longer had a warm and beating heart in my chest; in its place, I carried an icy cold Pearl, which made me especially sensitive to the cold.

But it was still good that I could open my eyes to see the world. I was no longer some princess and carried no burden on my shoulders. Jun Shifu gave me a new name: Jun Fu, with the hope that I would henceforth lead a fleeting life[2]. I thought, what a tragic and meaningful name it was.

I paid a high price for my act of martyrdom. Not only had I lost my life, but my body had suffered serious internal injuries from the fall. As a result, it became very weak thereafter. Although I felt no pain, it was not uncommon for me to cough up blood – it happened so often that I did not even bother to wash my handkerchief.

Jun Shifu used Mermaids Silk to reconstruct my face. Under his skilled hands, all that is left is a long scar that ran from the middle of my forehead, between my eyes, to my left ear – he had actually made me better-looking than I originally was. When Jun Wei first laid eyes on my new face, he fell silent for a long time before he said, “Too wicked – this face looks too wicked. Didn’t you like your old face?” I replied, “In my opinion, my features haven’t changed much except that I looked a little more wicked and savage. It’s alright – let’s just treat it as a failed face-lift.” However, the long scar was still an eyesore, so Master Jun crafted a thin silver mask that covered half of my face.

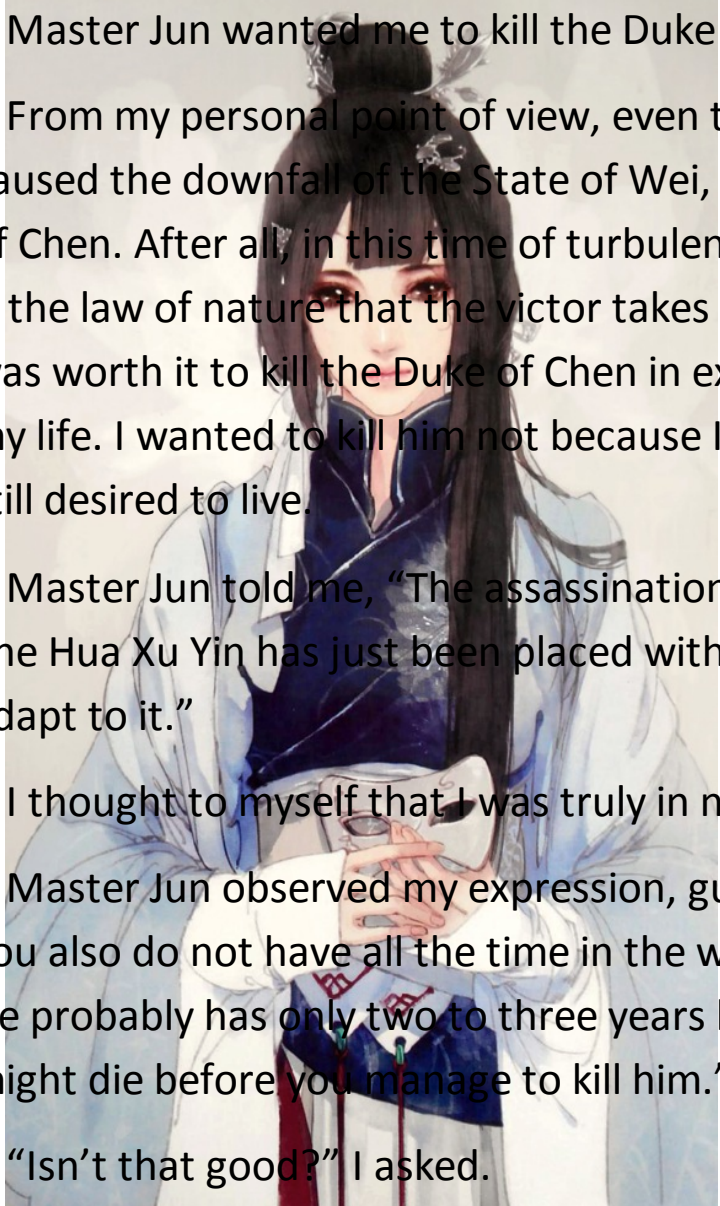


I thought I would be able to live a carefree life thereafter, but my life did not go as plan. Worldly cares and sorrows are born from the human mind; therefore as long as we have the ability to think, we could never escape this burden.

Master Jun had his reasons for expending so much effort in reviving me. He wanted me to perform a task that was more difficult than getting Jun Wei to bear a child for me.

He wanted me to go assassinate the Duke of Chen.

The Pearl he had placed within me contained the ancient secret manual, the Hua Xu Yin. If someone – the subject – drinks my blood, he would absorb the Pearl's energy and I will be able to see the Hua Xu Melody that is most suited to him. By playing this Hua Xu Diao, I can create a dream [3] of the subject's past. Whether the subject can escape this dream to come back to reality depended on whether he can overcome his own demons. Sadly, very few ever successfully escape from a dream induced by the Hua Xu Melody.



Master Jun wanted me to kill the Duke of Chen[4] in this manner.

From my personal point of view, even though it was the State of Chen that caused the downfall of the State of Wei, I did not harbor any hate for the Duke of Chen. After all, in this time of turbulence when human life is worth so little, it is the law of nature that the victor takes the crown. However, I did think that it was worth it to kill the Duke of Chen in exchange for my freedom for the rest of my life. I wanted to kill him not because I was the princess of Wei, but because I still desired to live.

Master Jun told me, “The assassination of the Duke of Chen can wait a while. The Hua Xu Yin has just been placed within you, so you will still need a while to adapt to it.”

I thought to myself that I was truly in no great hurry to complete this mission.

Master Jun observed my expression, guessed my thoughts and added, “But you also do not have all the time in the world. The Duke’s health is deteriorating. He probably has only two to three years left on this world. You must hurry or he might die before you manage to kill him.”

“Isn’t that good?” I asked.

He looked towards the mountains with a blank expression, “Not good. If so, my revenge would be meaningless.”

I wanted to remind him that if the Duke of Chen was currently suffering the torments of illness, ending his life might actually be doing him a favor. Wouldn’t my assassination then even be more meaningless? But upon further thought, it is good to help people in need and it will also help Master Jun accumulate good karma – so I kept silent.

Half a month later, Master Jun took Jun Wei with him to search for medical herb that will heal my injuries. Before he left, Jun Wei comforted me, “Looking at you now, surely no one will want to marry you. It’s alright – I will marry you if no one else wants you. In all circumstances, do not commit suicide by taking the Pearl out and waste all of our effort.”

I replied, “But your family will have no descendants if you marry me.”

“How can that be? If I marry you, I will surely also take in a few concubines,” he laughed as I chased him down the mountain.

6 months passed in the blink of an eye and spring arrived. I was unearthing a jar of superior plum wine when Master Jun and Jun Wei finally returned, with Xiao Huang in tow.

The story goes as such: Master Jun had a little white rabbit, which he used to test poison. Xiao Huang ate that little white rabbit, which led to him being poisoned. Due to the severity of his poisoning, even Master Jun was unable to cure him. So Master Jun sent Xiao Huang to the Saint of Medicine, Baili Yue to see if the Saint could cure him.

When Xiao Huang saw me again after my facial reconstruction, he could not recognize me. Not only did he ignore me when I tried to feed him rabbit meat, he bared his fangs aggressively at me. Jun Wei finally went to stroke his ears and gently explained to him, “She is your mother. You shouldn’t forget your mother who carried you for 10 long months and gave birth to you just because you have been spending a lot of time with your dad lately.” Sure enough, Xiao Huang came to nudge me affectionately after that.

I retorted, “You are the one who carried him for 10 months and gave birth to him. In fact, you carried his entire family for 10 months and gave birth to all of them!”

Jun Wei pointed a finger at me and said shakily, “And I was kindhearted enough to consider marrying you.”

I replied, “I will only consider marrying you if you can give birth to another tiger for me.”

He paused for a moment before instructing Xiao Huang, “Son – bite her.”

But Xiao Huang only came up to lick my hand.

Translator’s Notes:

[1] 鲛珠 [jiao zhu] – A pearl transformed from a mermaid’s tear
(<http://baike.baidu.com/view/3082774.htm>)

[2] “意思是我这一生，轻若尘埃，一拂即逝” – This is the original phrase, which translates to something along the lines of: “meaning for me to lead a life that is as weightless as dust, to pass with a single stroke”.

[3] What the Hua Xu Diao creates is more of a hallucination, ie a sensory experience of something that does not exist outside the mind. However, to preserve the tone of the story, I have opted to use the word “dream” as a substitute.

[4] The rank they used is “侯” (hou) which actually translates to marquis. However, from referring to the character as a marquis seems inappropriate to me as he actually the ruler of the State of Chen. Having recalled that the rulers of some parts of Europe are/were referred to as dukes, I decide to use the title “duke” as it better describes the character’s position in English.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 2.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 2.2

[March 30, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [17 Comments](#)



I am too tired to write a lengthy note today. If you were looking forward to the second half of the chapter, you all should thank Peanuts because she said since I have been on hiatus for so long, I need to post more regularly to make friends with everyone.

Chapter 2.2

The herbs Master Jun brought back were nothing short of miraculous; most of my injuries healed completely after five days of treatment. I was very satisfied with the results, but still could not help touching the obvious scar on my forehead that remained. I looked at my reflection in the mirror and was reminded of the saying: all that glitters is not gold[1]. Who would have thought that the such a lively body is actually hiding a multitude of decay? If the Pearl were to be removed from my body, my body would most likely turn into ashes within seconds. Just thinking about the possibility was terrifying.

Master Jun brought along Xiao Huang to visit me in the early morning of the sixth day. He sent Xiao Huang away to chase butterflies in the yard before he turning around and asked me, “How have your studies on the Hua Xu Yin progressed in this past year?”

I answered honestly, “My progress have been slow since I lack opportunity to practice.”

He pondered in silence for a while before he saying, “Ah Zhen, you know that the Pearl can only sustain you for three years only. The Pearl is fed by the dreams of mortals. Now that it resides within you, if you wish to live longer, you must use the Hua Xu Yin to absorb the life essence of others by weaving dreams for them. You are a kind child, so this must be difficult for you. But since I have spent so much effort in saving you, I don’t wish for you to live for only three years. Do you understand what I am saying?”

Master Jun is afraid that I do not understand. However, I have already understood this long ago – while I do not wish only to live for three short years, I am also unable to recklessly take the lives of innocents. But there are so many people in this world who live in regret. The Hua Xu Yin is able to create a dream of the past, and in this dream, these people can correct their mistakes. If these people choose to live on in their dream and are willing to sacrifice their lives to do that, wouldn’t this arrangement benefit both of us?

“Could you arrange for some work for me?” I asked.

Master Jun smiled a little and nodded his head, “Very well. Make a trip to the State of Jiang, then.”

Five days later, Jun Wei, Xiao Huang, myself and my seven stringed qin[2] appeared together at a border town in Chen.

Mount Junyu was actually not far from the Jiang-Chen border and we could have reached in three days. Our two-day delay was because we were riding a single horse. This in itself was not the problem. The problem (which caused us much pain and suffering) was that we had to prevent Xiao Huang from eating our only horse. We finally decided to eat our horse and continue our journey on foot. Our travelling pace increased greatly after that.

The border of the the States of Chen and Jiang was marked by a stretch of mountains called Mount Bi. We reached just at the right time – the whole of Mount Bi is covered by a thick layer of snow and avalanches happened frequently; only the most experienced of the veteran hunters in the area could safely pass through. If we had arrived in winter, we would have had to circle the foot of the mountain to get to the other side. But since we arrived in spring, we could travel using the small mountain paths and see the scenic views at the same time.

We had stopped at a gurgling mountain stream. I was refilling our water packs when I suddenly went still. Jun Wei asked, “What’s happened?”

I pointed at the bushes and foliage directly ahead of us, “You should go check out what is happening ahead and learn how lovers meet in secret. That can be used as material for your stories.” We then both snuck up front to see what was happening.

It was a young couple behaving intimately with each other. The man wore a brocade robe while woman was dressed in a thin silk dress. We could not make out their faces because there was a distance between us, but from what we could see – the man had a strong physique while the girl was slight and willowy.

They sat on a bed of wildflowers and there was a horse tethered to a nearby tree. I cast a distracted glance at Xiao Huang – sure enough, he was already

drooling while staring intently at the horse. But as Jun Wei was holding him by the back of his neck, Xiao Huang could only exercise self-restraint. The man picked a small red flower and placed it in the woman's hair. The woman then threw her arms around the man from behind, their bodies pressed close against each other.

Jun Wei turned and placed his hands over my eyes, "If you continue looking, you will surely get stys[3]" I pushed his hands away, "I also need to enhance my knowledge." He was not persuaded and continued to try to block my vision. This annoyed me, so I pushed him over.

It was at this moment, something happened. Jun Wei was also startled by what he saw, "How did the lady manage to maneuver the man under her so quickly? That woman is also too forward. Why did she suddenly run away with the horse? She shouldn't have done that; it is too unkind to tease a man sexually and leave him hanging."

"Sexual teasing, my foot! Didn't you see the woman stab the man from behind before she fled?" I asked.

"Ah? Weren't they just hugging each other a little while ago?" Jun Wei asked.

We could have left without any trouble. However, the sight of the man's body crumpling onto the ground reminded me of one person: Mu Yan.

Since I woke up, I have not thought of him for a long time. This was not because my feelings for him have extinguished – but rather because there was nothing that can be done even if we should meet again. Before my death, I persevered in my feelings for him because I was alive. But I was no longer among the living – I did not breath, nor did I have any sensory feelings. It is already too much to ask of him not to be afraid of me now, never mind anything else. As such, it is better for us never to meet again.

Jun Wei looked over the man's wound and pronounced that even though the wound was deep, it did not cut into any vital organs or arteries. Since we administered first aid in time, he should live.

I studied his face: thick black eyebrows, a straight nose, thin lips that are pale from blood loss – he really is a handsome man. The ground beneath us had turned red from his blood.

“The question is, why did we bother to save him?” Jun Wei asked, once he managed to stop the man’s bleeding.

“Since he is such a handsome man, perhaps we can take him to the town and sell him for a high price?” I replied. Jun Wei ignored me and called to Xiao Huang, “Son, come and help Daddy drag him along.” Xiao Huang turned his head away. Jun Wei continued, “When we reach the town, Daddy will buy you a roast chicken for you to eat.” Xiao Huang immediately rush over happily.

This handsome man laid unconscious in a clinic for two days straight before waking up. During this time, he said nothing except for mumbling “Zi Yan”. I guessed that “Zi Yan” is a lady’s name, most probably the name of the woman who stabbed him. I sighed: it has been proven time and time again that even heroes can be seduced by a beautiful woman[4].

“What is wrong with this man? We have saved his life, yet since he regained consciousness, he has not expressed a single word of thanks to us, “ Jun Wei grumbled.

“He is a good-looking man, so I guess we should have expected that he might be a little headstrong,” I replied.

Jun Wei glared at me, “Are you saying that just because he is good-looking, it is alright for him not to pay for the medicine he drank? That it is alright for him not to express gratitude?”

“Yes.”

Jun Wei’s clutched at his chest in anger at her response.

Our original plan was to save him and hopefully, receive some reward. If his home was nearby, we would have sent him home on the way before continuing on our journey. However, life seldom takes the path we wish – who would have thought that a man dressed in the finery of a gentleman would not have a single penny on him.

I spoke to him about it awkwardly, “We rescued you in the mountains and brought you here out of the kindness of our hearts. But your injuries were not

light and we have paid for all of your medicine so far. We have a long journey ahead, and with a tiger in tow, our expenses are high and our travelling funds are low. So...”

I thought, I am going to hit him if he remains unresponsive.

But he did not give me the opportunity to hit him after all.

Before I could finished what I was about to say, he interrupted me, “A long journey?” That pair of good-looking eyebrows arched upwards and a small smile formed on his lips.

I thought to myself, Did his disappointment in love actually turn him into a dummy?

He continued, “Since your journey is long, it is likely to be dangerous. This untalented person[5] so happened has practiced swordsmanship for a few years. If you do not mind, do allow me to accompany you and protect you on your journey as repayment for saving my life.”

“But about the money for your medicine...”

He removed his jade thumb-ring and handed it to me, “You are truly worried. Pawn this and you should get at least twenty taels of gold. That should be able to pay for my medicine as well as my food along the way.”

I took the thumb-ring from him and looked at him, “You don’t need to protect me. Twenty taels of gold is sufficient reward for saving you.”

He replied lightly, “My life is not as cheap as that.”

I looked at him from top to bottom, “But we must leave and continue our journey tomorrow, would you be well enough by then?”

A low laugh escaped his lips, “That would not be a problem.”

Jun Wei did not understand why this gentleman in blue insisted on accompanying us. After much thought, he finally concluded that it must be because he has fallen for me. I was elated for a while. It was not until I looked at myself in the mirror that I realised this was unlikely since half of my face was

covered by the silver mask.

After listening to my rebuttal, Jun Wei lapsed into deep thought again before saying, “In that case, there is no explanation.”

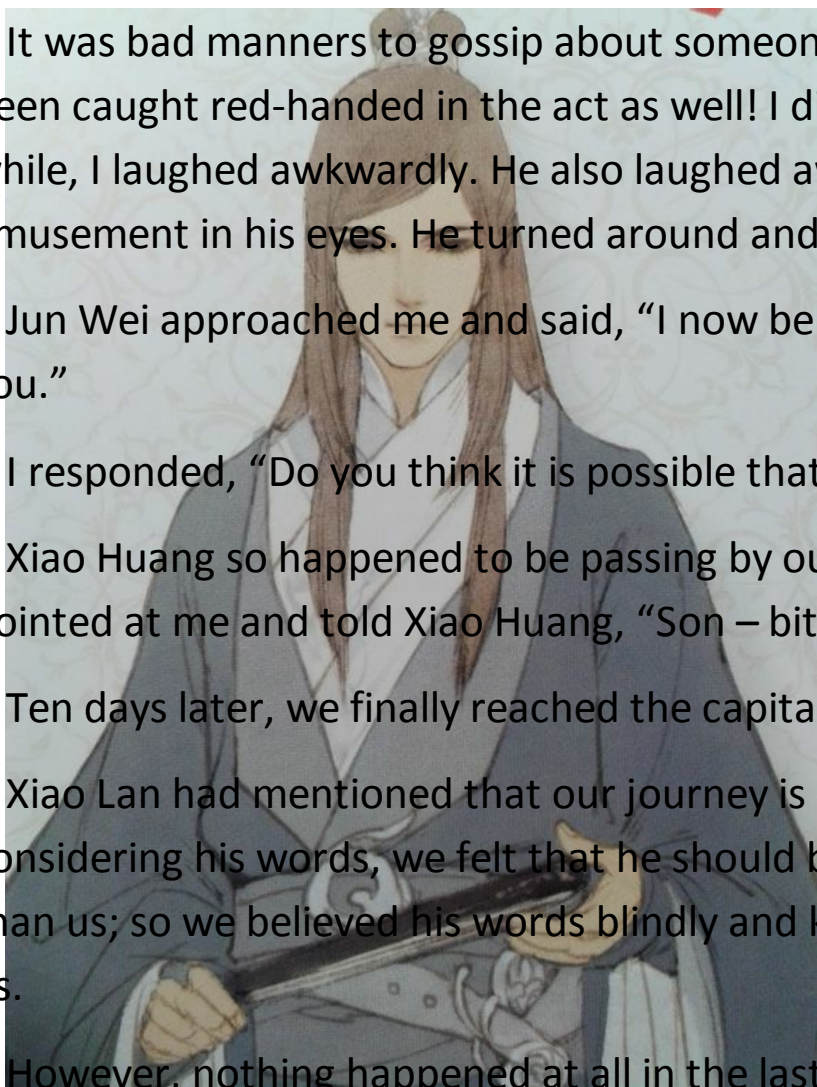
“There are many things in this world that cannot be explained. Just look at Xiao Lan’s[6]: a handsome and talented young man. In a logical world, he would be surrounded by adoring women. However, you have seen it for yourself: the girl he liked had ruthlessly stabbed him. If it weren’t for us, he would have been left to die in the wild. His ability to pick girls really is so bad, it almost caused him is life. This wouldn’t have happened in a reasonable world.”

Jun Wei pondered for awhile before agreeing. He thought about it a little more and before asking, “Who is Xiao Lan?”

“The man in blue whom we saved the other day,” I replied.



Just as I turned to leave to go to the kitchen to check on the medicine, I saw Xiao Lan staring at us. The hand that he had raised to knock on the doorframe was still frozen in mid air.



It was bad manners to gossip about someone behind their backs. And to have been caught red-handed in the act as well! I did not know what to say. After a while, I laughed awkwardly. He also laughed awkwardly, but there was no amusement in his eyes. He turned around and returned to the little back room.

Jun Wei approached me and said, “I now believe that he has not fallen for you.”

I responded, “Do you think it is possible that he has fallen for you?”

Xiao Huang so happened to be passing by our door. Jun Wei ground his teeth, pointed at me and told Xiao Huang, “Son – bite her.”

Ten days later, we finally reached the capital of Jiang, Yue City.

Xiao Lan had mentioned that our journey is bound to be dangerous. After considering his words, we felt that he should be more worldly and experienced than us; so we believed his words blindly and kept waiting for danger to befall on us.

However, nothing happened at all in the last 10 days; we did not even meet a single bandit robber. Jun Wei asked me, “When do you think we will meet a fiend who will attack us?” I replied, “I don’t know. Let’s just wait.” But after waiting for a long time, we still did not meet any fiends and we could only continue to worry.

The day before we entered Yue City, another girl joined our travelling company. Xiao Lan and that girl said that she was Xiao Lan’s handmaiden and bodyguard and that her name was Zhi Su. We met her when we were buying biscuits by the street.

The sun was setting in the background and she was riding a white horse at full speed towards us. Jun Wei pulled me to the side to avoid being trampled on. As she jumped off the horse, her pale blue sleeve brushed my cheek.

Before Jun Wei and I even realised what was happening, she had knelt before Xiao Lan. Ignoring everyone around them, she looked at him with her reddened eyes and choked out, “Gongzi[7], Zhi Su has finally found you.”

Zhi Su had delicate features and a little red mole on her forehead. Xiao Lan expressed neither approval nor disapproval at her insistence on following us. Jun Wei was quick to agree – Zhi Su is a pretty girl after all, so it was easy to persuade him.

While he was quick to agree to Zhi Su accompanying us, he was also dissatisfied with Xiao Lan at the same time. He whispered to me, “This man really is amorous, even his bodyguard is a woman.”

But I thought, before we left Mount Junyu, Master Jun had instructed Jun Wei to protect me – so Jun Wei could also be considered as my bodyguard. If we were to follow Jun Wei’s logic, wouldn’t I be considered to be amorous as well?

We spent the night at an inn. Xiao Huang woke me up in the middle of the night and looked at me soulfully, as if inviting me to take a stroll with him in the moonlight. We walked down the corridor, a tiger and a dead person together, our footsteps so light it was almost as if we were floating.

Just as they were about to enter the backyard, I heard Zhi Su’s voice, “There is nothing special about the girl. Why is Gongzi refusing to return to the mansion? Does Gongzi know, while you were away this few days, 2nd Gongzi has started taking action. Zhi Su knows that Miss Zhi Yan has wounded Gongzi badly, but think about the big picture.”

I pondered on whether I should continue listening to this gossip. In the end, manners won over curiosity and I decided not to eavesdrop. However, before I could leave, Xiao Lan had already started speaking in a familiar low voice, “Have you all... found Zhi Yan?”

I was leading Xiao Huang away from the doorway when I heard Zhi Su reply, “Gongzi, you were sincere in your feelings towards her, but she... she is a spy sent by the Zhao Government. Her... her mission was to assassinate you. She...”

Her voice faded away behind Xiao Huang and I.

Under the eaves of the veranda, I recalled the familiarity from earlier. I felt like I had returned to that cave where Mu Yan sat opposite me smiling slightly, his

pale fingers playing his qin strung with silk string. It has been three years since that incident and I could not really remember his voice. But that song he played would sometimes sound in my head, like a song I did not know how to sing.

The moon appeared large and very white. I lifted my hand to cover my eyes, just like how he used his fingers to cover my eyes once. But my eyes were no longer that of someone amongst the living.

And there is nothing I could do about it.

Translator's Notes:

[1] 金玉其外, 败絮其中 (pinyin: jinyu qi wai, baixu qizhong).

[2] The guqin (simplified/traditional: 古琴; pinyin: gǔqín) is a plucked seven-string [Chinese musical instrument](#) of the [zither](#) family. Traditionally, the instrument was simply referred to as qin (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guqin>). I had considered translating it into English, but am unable to find an accurate English word for it. It is not a zither, lyre nor a lute (which are all classical stringed instruments). In the end, I decided to just refer to it as qin rather than use an inaccurate translation.

[3] It is a chinese old wives tale told to kids that we will get stys in our eyes if we see something naughty.

[4] 英雄难过美人关 (pinyin: yingxiong nanguo meiren guan) – a chinese proverb that illustrates how even the heroes can be seduced by a beautiful woman.

[5] He refers to himself as “在下” (pinyin: zaixia), which is a very polite form of self reference. It indicates humility and polite distance. He continues to use this term in his conversation with Jun Fu throughout the chapter, but I have switched to use “I/me” after the first time since it reads smoother in English.

[6] lit. Little Blue.

[7] Can be used to refer to the son of princes, nobles, aristocracy or the rich.

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Chapter 3.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 3.1

[April 4, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [45 Comments](#)



So we have a surprise in store for you. Have you guessed from the picture above?

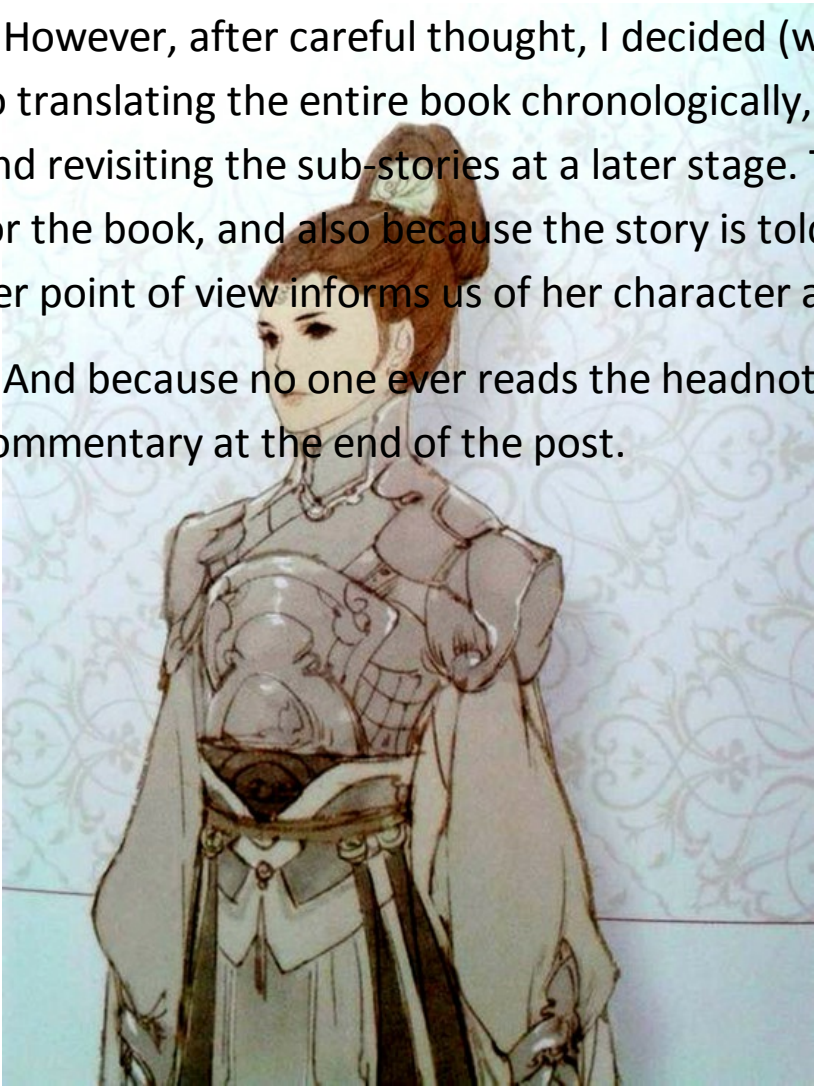
Dramatic Drumroll

Yes – again, after much wiffy-waffling about with Peanuts, we have decided to translate the entire story chronologically based on the book. Or rather I have decided, and Peanuts being ever sweet and supportive.

In my first post (ie Chapter 2.1), I had mentioned that we have decided to translate only the main story of Jun Fu and Mu Yan and skip/gloss over the sub-stories.

However, after careful thought, I decided (with Peanut's support) to commit to translating the entire book chronologically, as opposed to skipping around and revisiting the sub-stories at a later stage. The decision stems from my love for the book, and also because the story is told from Jun Fu's point of view – and her point of view informs us of her character and personality.

And because no one ever reads the headnote, I am just going to save it for the commentary at the end of the post.



Chapter 3.1

I finally met the patron Master Jun had arranged for me three days later; she is Song Ning, the lady-wife of Shen An, the Zhenyuan General of the State of Jiang. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to her my patron as ultimately, she is not buying a beautiful dream from me, but rather, I am buying her life from her for the price of a dream.

We were at a little villa outside the city. The word of mouth was that the general and his lady-wife were at odds with each other. Song Ning had moved out of the General's Mansion two years ago to this villa to convalescence, and has never returned to the General's Mansion since. A lot had happened in those two years, for example: Shen An taking in a concubine, Song Ning falling ill, Song Ning's health's deteriorating, Song Ning on the brink of death.

The old servant who came to escort us inside informed us that the lady wishes to see me alone and suggested that Jun Wei and Xiao Lan should go ahead and get some rest in the guestrooms. Xiao Lan had no objections but Jun Wei was unhappy with the arrangement; I understood that he was concerned for my safety, did not understand why. What could possibly pose a danger to someone who was already dead.

They bargained for quite sometime before they reached a compromise: Xiao Huang shall accompany me to the meeting. Jun Wei petted Xiao Huang's head and instructed, "Son – protect your mother well."

I was petting Xiao Huang's head when I met Xiao Lan's gaze. He stared at me for a few minutes before saying, "Miss Jun should go quickly and come back quickly."

The old servant escorted me through two corridors, across a garden and until we came onto a lake. A little curtained pavilion sat in the middle of the lake, surrounded by lotuses. The woman reading in bed looked up when we entered the pavilion.

She looked like one of those beauties who had just stepped out of a master's painting. Sadly, her complexion is chalk white; she may not live long in this world

even if chose not to take her life. This was not because I knew the art of face-reading, but because in this subject of death, there was no one more qualified than I who was already dead – hers was the pallor of someone who was reaching the end of the road. Furthermore, the purpose of my visit is to take her life, so even if she does not pass away natural, I should create the illusion of an accidental death.

The wind lifted the curtains – it was already May. The lady put her book down and coughed a little before looking down at Xiao Huang. She said gently, “Such a tame tiger. Before I had gotten married, I had also raised a wolf cub. It was about this big...” She drew a shape in the air with her finger to illustrate before shaking her head with a laugh. She looked up at me with an unreadable gaze, “Are you Jun Fu? The Jun Fu who Master Jun said can help me realised my greatest wish?”

“Yes,” I answered. To be honest, I was still not used to my new name. I was not a person who preferred the new to the old. I had been Ye Zhen for 17 years, and was attached to that name. So even though it has been a while since I had been given my new name, it was not easy for me to forget my old identity.

Her fingers tapped the rattan bed a couple of times, her pensive expression gradually became a little flushed and a dimple appeared beside her mouth, “Jun Fu, do you know what is the dream I want?”

I sat on Xiao Huang’s back and looked at her seriously, “I don’t know and you will need to tell me the dream.” I thought for a while and added, “I am not here to help you, but here to perform a bargain. I do not want gold or silver as payment and I just need you to take care of our meals during our stay here. Whatever you want your dream to be, that is the dream I will weave for you. And whether to stay in your dream or to leave the dream, that is your choice.”

“Oh?” She said.

I nodded my head. “If you choose to leave the dream, I will not take a single penny. However, if you choose to stay within the dream...”

She smiled slightly, “And what will Miss Jun do if I choose to stay in my dream?”

I looked into her eyes, “If you choose to stay in your dream, you will give me

the rest of your life essence as payment. What do you think?”

Her beautiful brows twitched a little as she stared up at the ceiling. After a little while, she gave a short laugh and said, “Alright.”

That day, I did not manage to return earlier as Xiao Lan had wished. Song Ning had given me her story. This story is her inner demon, a story that she wanted to change even if it was only in a dream. Of course, that was a form of deceiving herself, but because she did not know how to lie to herself, she hoped that the dream could fool her into believing.

The curtains surrounding the pavillion lifted in the wind, revealing the reflection of the setting sun in the lake. Song Ning drank her tea which contained a few drops of my blood. As my blood circulated within her body, musical note by musical note lined up in a sequence before my eyes which I committed to memory. This is Song Ning’s Hua Xu Melody.

Song Ning started to reminisce about the past; scene by scene, her memories appeared before my eyes through music of her Hua Xu Melody. She said, “Miss Jun, did you know – even though I am the wife of a general from Jiang, I was not originally from the State of Jiang. Seven years ago, when I was 17 – about the same age as you are now – I married here with a heart full of love and affection. It was really the best time in my youth...”

In the best time of her youth, Song Ning who is the younger sister of the Song Yan, a great general from the State of Li, encountered Shen An in the battlefield between the States of Li and Jiang. At that time, General Shen An was the youngest general in the Jiang army. He was stern of face, possessed great martial skills and had the reputation of having won all of his battles.

Song Ning came from a family with a long history of military service. Her upbringing was that of a boy’s and her skill with a spear was unrivalled. At the tender age of 14, she had already joined her brother in many of his military campaigns. When she was 16, when other girls of her age held a needle to embroider articles for their wedding trousseau, Song Ning was busy using her spear to kill enemy soldiers in battle.



Historically, there were always more males than females born in the State of Jiang. As such, in the spring of the 17th year of the rule of the Duke Lizhuang of Li, the threshold of every aristocratic family in Li with a marriageable daughter was worn out from visitors, except for that of the Great General's Mansion. None of the aristocratic men had dared to offer for Song Ning's hand in marriage; they were afraid that if they were to take a concubine after marrying Song Ning, Song Ning would beat both her husband and the concubine to death. So the Duke Lizhuang gave Song Ning's hand in marriage to the second son of the Prime Minister. When the groom-to-be heard of this news, he promptly fell off his horse.

Song Ning was away at the battlefield when she received the news. She sat by a stream quietly for a long time until her brother found her. He said, "You don't need to worry about that kid who doesn't know what is good for him. Your elder brother here will have a way to make him marry you."

She smiled at her brother and said softly, "There is no need for elder brother to get angry. Those aristocrats back in the capital are good for nothing and only know how to live in a lap of luxury. They think that I am not good enough for them, but have they considered whether I think they are good enough for me? If I were to marry, I will only marry the hero of this generation."

These words were originally said off-handedly to indicate that she is not taking the matter of the Prime Minister's second son to heart. However, in the winter of that year, the hero of the generation in her life appeared on a black horse carrying a heavy sword. His family name is Shen, given name, An and his courtesy name, Bozhou.

In the winter of the 17th year of the rule of the Duke Lizhuang, a wild horse of a rare breed[1] was discovered somewhere near the border of Li and Jiang. Both States wanted this horse for their own and refused to compromise. This sowed the seeds of strife of many years that eventually led to a full out war between the two States.

Song Ning had heard amazing stories about Shen An. In the foolishness of her youth, she was unconvinced of the veracity of these story and had always wanted an opportunity to compete with him.

That snowy day finally came when both State's armies met at Shangyang Pass. Taking this rare opportunity, the usually responsible Song Ning ignored her brother's silent warnings, rushed out to the front line and stated, "The Purple Spear[2], Song Ning has come to challenge General Shen An." Her cool voice was carried away by the cold wind towards the enemy camp. A figure in white emerge between the ranks of enemy soldiers on a horse carrying a long sword, his handsome face expressionless.

Song Ning's skills with a spear has never appeared so clumsy; she was thrown off her horse within five strikes. Never in her life had she been defeated so quickly or thoroughly. He came over and easily knocked her helmet off. Momentarily startled, he finally said, "So, it is a female."

Song Ning fell in love with Shen An then, because he had defeated her. This is also the reason why it became popular for girls to find a mate through a martial arts competition. When strong females are looking for a life partner, they are usually looking for someone who can defeat them. If you want her, you must first defeat her. However, if you defeat her, then you must marry her. If you defeat her but refuse to marry her, you are just being cruel.

Her purple spear had been thrown a distance off. Shen An bent over and used his sword to lift the weapon and throw it in her direction. The spear hit head first into the ground next to Song Ning. "Your spear," he said, his voice without inflection.

Snow swirled in all directions. All he could see was the Li army of thirty thousand strong behind her. All she could see was him alone.

Shen An became a mighty mountain in Song Ning's heart. His black stallion, his

peerless swordsmanship, his life that is not spent in the arms of a woman – this is the hero that she had always longed for. Alas, he is the hero of an enemy State.



But heroes can fall on hard times. In fact, all men deserving of being referred to as a great general in history had either suffered hardships, or were on their way to suffering such hardships.

Shen An embarked his journey towards hard times after he met Song Ning. Actually, it is not right to phrase it this way as if it is Song Ning's fault. Shen An's defeat at Canglu Ye[3] really had nothing to do with her. After much analysis, the military strategists could only conclude that the defeat was because Shen An's horoscope indicated that he should not have attacked that day.

Shen An was soundly defeated by Li's Great General Song Yan at Canglu Ye. His entire army of five thousand was annihilated and he himself was struck by multiple arrows and was most likely dead. Song Ning received a message delivered by her brother's greyfalcon the next day. In a slip of her hand, the palm-sized square of silk fell into the water and the ink spread across the surface like a shadow.

Song Ning refused to believe that Shen An had died because in her heart, Shen An was undefeatable. However, this undefeatable hero was defeated within 3 days; as her newly developed feelings remained strong, she had great difficulty in believing this news.

So Song Ning packed some medicine, lept on the horse and rushed out of the

camp. Her thinking was, if he has not died, then she must save him. If he has already died, then she must find his body and bury him with her own hands; she cannot let him lie in a lonely unmarked grave in the vast dessert.

He is the first man she had feelings for. He was a real man that was miles apart from those useless aristocrats back at the Capital. However, with her lack of experience with men, how would she know what a real man was like? She was only imagining what a real man was like and she fell more and more in love with the Shen An in her imagination .

Although the sky was overcast, the desert wind cut like a knife. Her horse neighed in pain from being struck by the gravel blown by the wind. Song Ning laid very low on the back of the horse, her eyes covered with white gauze to protect them, as she struggled to travel against the wind. The wind blew against her face and hands, leaving behind cuts. She would from time to time lick the cuts on her hand before continuing on.

She thought to herself that Shen An must be just waiting for her ahead. This belief sustained her when travelling through the longest stretch of road in the shortest time possible, and at the same time avoid her brother's army's camp. This belief is probably not shared by anyone else. Just think about it: how could Shen An possibly be waiting for her ahead? Shen An probably didn't even remember her at all.

Canglu Ye appeared ahead of her. The desert storm had already covered up most of the blood stained ground, making it as if it the battlefield has been long abandoned. It is only the smell of blood in the air that belied the fact that it was only recently hell on earth. The corpses of Jiang soldiers covered the entire area; one could not take a step without stepping on human flesh and bone.

Song Ning used her bare hands to turn over more than two thousand bodies. One could deduce from this that Song Ning and Shen An were not meant to be; if they were meant to be, Shen An ought to be the first body she turned over. But Song Ning did not give up. Perhaps she felt that she must find in order to make her journey worthwhile. It may be her perseverance that finally touched the Heavens; when she turned over her 2728th body and wiped the blood and much of his face, she hugged him and choked out, "Shen An."

Song Ning's blind gamble had paid off: it is difficult for a hero to die even when his time has come. Shen An was still alive. She was still holding him when she heard him grunt in pain from having his wound moved. Her heart thundered within her chest as if struck with a heavy hammer as tears rolled down her face, "I knew that I ought to come."

They sat together on a pile of bodies. Shen An had fallen back into unconsciousness while Song Ning, who had always faced the world, even in battle, with a small smile, continued crying until tears covered her entire face.

Song Ning had saved Shen An. She had studied medicine before but her talent was limited in this area. At the end of her studies, her skills could barely cure a simple cold and his had greatly saddened her master back then. And Shen An's injuries here were so severe that even the Saint of Medicine, Baili Yue may not be able to heal.

But under these harsh conditions, the fact that not only did Song Ning manage not to kill Shen An by mistake – but for Shen An to gradually improve under her care – could only be attributed to Heaven having been touched once again by Song Ning's sincerity. However, Shen An's eyes have been temporarily blinded by the desert storm.

He sat in a cave in a nearby snow mountain, caressed his sword gently and asked, "May I ask if you are a lady or gentleman?"

Song Ning never did answer his question. The Li Army had razed Canglu Ye to the ground and defeated Shen An's 5,000 students. She thought that surely Shen An must hate everyone from Li, so she did not dare let Shen An know that she is Song Ning from the State of Li.

However, life is unpredictable. That night, Shen An's injuries flared up which caused him to be extremely susceptible to the cold. No matter how many fires she raised in the cave, he continued to suffer and Song Ning could only look on in distress. She thought for a long while and finally decided to use a method described in some old medical texts.

She took off all of their clothes and wrapped herself around him. The fires in the cave slowly melted the ice covering the on the walls, water dripped off making a 'dida-dida' sound. Shen An roused to consciousness and tried to push

her away but she only hugged him closer. The more he struggled to push her away, the harder she held on to him.



“There is no need for Miss to ruin your good name on my account,” he said helplessly.

Song Ning could only laugh in her heart. She used her finger to write lightly on his chest, “It is merely a doctor’s kindness – please do not worry.”

In actual fact, there was no kindness in her heart. Her thinking was, this is the man she likes, her hero – she would do anything to save him, even at the cost of her life. What more when it is only skinship?

Shen An gave up trying to push her away. Instead, he gently placed his arm around her shoulders, “If Miss have no objections, I will definitely come to offer for your hand when my injuries have healed”. Song Ning trembled a little before resting her head against his chest.

After spending the night suffering from the cold, Shen An’s condition took a turn for the worst. He spent most of the time in lethargic sleep. There was nothing more Song Ning could do by herself, so she finally decided to carry Shen An across the mountain to the nearest town for treatment.

The journey was fraught with danger. Firstly, there is the danger of them being frozen to death or being caught in an avalanche. There is also the danger of them getting lost in the wilds and starving to death. All in all, it would be a very difficult trek.

But after much consideration, Song Ning decided it was a viable solution. While it may seem to be seeking death if they were to leave the cave, but they

were also waiting for death if they were to continue staying on in the cave. If death is the ultimate result, at least there is a glimmer of hope in deciding to leave. Never in the entire time did she consider abandoning Shen An.

After travelling through the mountains with Shen An on her back for three days straight without stopping, she finally reached a clinic in the nearest town. Her hands and feet were already covered with cold sores, and she could not even stand up straight any longer.

Shen An had slept through it all.

It had been ten days since Song Ning left the Li army camp. Song Yan was worried to death and had sent his men out to look for her in the area. She had spotted his brother's subordinates as soon as she entered town and knew then she could not stay here for too long.

Song Ning took out a piece of jade and broke it into two. She hung one half around Shen An's neck using a piece of red string and kept the other half, intending to use it as a token. She then placed Shen An in the care of the grandfather and granddaughter who ran the clinic, and told them, "This is your country's general. If you heal him, your king will surely reward you." The old doctor knelt down quickly and his mute granddaughter held onto him to support him, signaling with hand gestures that Song Ning did not understand.

She raised her hand and touched his eyelashes. His face was very pale and he was fast asleep, unaware that she was leaving.

As Song Ning told me her story, I saw even the parts that were not within her memory.

On the third day after Song Ning left, Shen An finally woke up on a rainy night. After being treated with medicated water, his eyes could finally see again.

The old doctor's mute granddaughter sat by his bedside. He studied her carefully before finally chucking, "So this is what you look like. Have you been worried these past few days? Where are we now?"

The mute girl's pretty face blushed red in an instant; she bit her lip and looked away from him shyly.

Shen An studied his surroundings, “Are we at a clinic? Come sit closer to me.”

The mute girl with her red face scooted closer.

He frowned slightly, “You do not know how to speak?”

She nodded hesitatingly.

He took her hand, “No wonder I have never heard you speak. It’s because you did not know how to.”

She cast a peek at him and shyly nodded, but did not remove her hand from his.

In the spring of the 18th year of the Duke Lizhuang’s rule, the State of Jiang lost the war. Jiang surrendered two border cities to the State of Li and the two states signed a peace treaty. Not long thereafter, the Duke Lizhuang adopted the sister of the Great General Song Yan, Song Ning as his daughter and granted her the title, Princess Wu[4]. An ambassador was sent to the court of Duke Jiangmu of Jiang to offer Song Ning’s hand in marriage to Shen An, with the intention of forming a marriage alliance between the two states.

Song Ning previously hid her identity from Shen An because she was mindful of the enmity between their two states, and feared that Shen would rather die rather than allow her to save him. But now, as she was about be married to her hero, she remembered that Shen An had promised to marry her. Regardless of whether Shen An loved her, she was going to make him keep his promise. This was the reason why men hated to make any promise to women; because their memories were too good and they will find a way to make them keep their word.

Song Ning wrote a long letter and enclosed her half of their jade token for the ambassador to privately pass to Shen An.

She never received any reply from Shen An. But she did not mind, because after all, Shen An had already agreed to the marriage proposal. Song Ning kept analysing the situation to herself: firstly, Shen An had promised to marry her and secondly, he had personally agreed to marry her in front of the Duke Jiangmu. His co-operativeness in this assured her that there would be no further obstacles.

But she had failed to consider one factor, that is Heaven’s Will. Perhaps it is arcane to attribute life’s quirks to Heaven’s Will, but sometimes that is the only

explanation, the case in point being Song Ning's circumstances as well as my own.

On her wedding night, Song Ning had spent her time reflecting on her feelings for Shen An. She wanted to give him her most beautiful smile the instant he lifted her wedding veil. She was already a lovely woman and when she smiled, her beauty could topple a city. So when Shen An lifted her red wedding veil and was confronted with her smile that could topple a city, he was dazed.

Song Ning turned her head slightly and looked at him from the corner of her eye, her smile growing brighter. His face was expressionless but those were indeed the features familiar to her. She thought that her entire lifetime's happiness was right there.

Her nanny had taught her that she should say sweet words that would make her husband treat her tenderly, for example, "Husband, I am giving myself to you, please treasure me well."



Just as she was pondering how to phrase her words, he coldly asked, "Do you know who should be sitting on this bed tonight?"

She did not know what he was talking about. She looked up and uttered, "Ah?"

The coldness in his eyes was frightening, "I heard that it was your brother who suggested this marriage alliance. Why must it be me? Just because I bested you once on the battlefield? Song Ning – from your secret enquiries, didn't you already know that I already have a fiancée?"

"But you said that you would marry me," she whispered.

"I am, but a humble subject," he sneered. "His Highness blackmailed me with Qiqi's life, how could I refuse your proposal? Only, I do not wish to receive

anything from you and I request that you do not expect anything from me.”

She looked at him, “I never wanted anything from you, I only...”

“That’s good, then,” he cut her off.

He stormed out of the wedding chamber, leaving behind a pool of broken moonlight before the bed. She stared at his back and thought, this is not how it should be. She choked out his name, “Shen An” just like how she did when she held him close at Canglu Ye. But he did not stop.

She did not cry, but remained in a state of shock. She had only cried once in her life, and that was when she found him alive at Canglu Ye. She took off her red wedding dress and folded it neatly. She then lay down in bed and watched the pair of dragon and phoenix candles burn out in the sad moonlight filtering through the window.

The next day, when Song Ning went to pay her respects to the old general and his wife, she overheard the maids gossiping that Shen An had spent the night at He Feng Yuan[5], where Liu Qiqi, Miss Qiqi lived.

She heard that Qiqi made the general’s clothes; her embroidery was so fine the bamboo looked as if it was real.

She heard that made a fragrant sweet soup for the general using the first lotus seeds from the pond.

She heard that even though Qiqi did not know how to speak, she could still make the general very happy.

Song Ning’s attitude towards the matter was that since Liu Qiqi should have been Shen An’s wife and she had inadvertently ruined their romance, she ought to keep her distance from them. Since their wedding night, Shen An had not shown his face in front of her. From that, she could see that he is a faithful man and felt that that should be respected. She thought, she loved Shen An, but since it has come to this, she could only turn her love into an ideal. Ideals did not feel wronged; ideals did not feel desire.

She had heard a lot about Liu Qiqi.

Although she had come to a self-realisation and channeled her love in the

direction of “I love you, but that has nothing to do with you,” she still did not wish to actually meet this person, Liu Qiqi. But sometimes, you won’t get what you want in life, just like how when an emperor wishes for an heir, his harem can understandingly bear him a son immediately. There are many things that are predestined in life, for example whether you will have a son or a daughter; this includes how Song Ning who never had the habit of exercising after lunch, decided to take a walk in the garden one day, and finally met the legendary Liu Qiqi.

Notes:

- [1] 汗血馬 (pinyin: han xue ma): lit. cold-blooded horse; a rare breed of wild horse from the Western Region during the time of the Han Dynasty, which according to legend can travel 1000 li in a day. (see: <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%B1%97%E8%A1%80%E9%A6%AC>)
- [2] This is Song Ning’s 名号 (pinyin: ming hao), which is an alternative name. From what I understand, its more like a nickname.
- [3] A place, which I was unable to translate into English – but must be relatively close to Shangyang Pass.
- [4] lit. The Martial Princess
- [5] lit. Garden of the Lotus Phoenix.
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Translator’s Comments

Among the four sub-stories in Hua Xu Yin, I had always thought that Song Ning’s was the most tragic of them all. Because much in the vein of Romeo and Juliet’s star-crossed love, this was a tragic comedy of errors, of bad timing and miscommunication.

Unlike in the other three sub-stories where there were very real obstacles that would have most likely prevented the couple from being together even in the end, no such obstacle exist in this story. Their countries were no longer at war, familial objections on both sides were no longer an issue, *etc.* And for that, to

me, this story is even sadder than the rest, because they could quite easily have been happy together.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 3.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 3.2

[April 13, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [51 Comments](#)



Translating this chapter was really difficult for me, emotionally. We have all heard of writer's block where the author doesn't know how to continue the story. I had translator's block, because I was fully aware of where the story was going and was very unwilling to go there. But still, to that place we must go, otherwise I might have very angry readers at my doorstep.

But I must thank you all! I was very heartened by the responses in the comments from the first half of chapter 3 last week – there were some excellent points brought up! This week's post is a meaty chapter with a lot of going ons – please do feel free to leave your thoughts with us.

So onwards with Song Ning's story, we go...

Chapter 3.2

"I love him and I miss him, and I don't speak with him anymore. It's a hurtful and painful subject."

– Mary-Kate Olsen

There is a prelude to every story. The prelude to this story was that Song Ning picked up a jade pendant in the garden one day. The pendant had been finely set in gold inlay but one can clearly see a crack down the middle of the piece. She stared at it for a long while and was certain that this was the same jade token she had broken into two when she left Shen An last winter.

A woman rushed towards her. She stopped in front of Song Ning, pointed at the jade pendant with one hand and at herself with the other. Song Ning raised her head, allowing the woman to see her face. The woman's face immediately went pale.

Song Ning thought that the woman looked familiar. A breeze blew past, carrying in it a light herbal scent that reminded her of the little clinic behind the mountain. She held onto the jade pendant and smiled at the other woman, "You are here as well? Shen An is truly not an ungrateful person. Where is your grandfather?"

The woman's lips trembled and turned around as if to flee. Song Ning frowned and reached out to stop her, "Am I that frightening to you?"

The woman struggled desperately to escape when Shen An's voice suddenly came from behind, "Qiqi."

Qiqi. In a moment of distraction, Shen An had snatched the woman away from her grasp and into his protective embrace, like how a giant tree would protect a vine encircling it, gently and intimately. But when he looked at Song Ning, his face was cold like the winter frost. He questioned her, "What are you doing?"



She did not reply his question. Instead, she stared at the woman in Shen An's arms, "Qiqi. You are Qiqi?" The woman did not dare raise her head.

Shen An frowned heavily. His gaze fell on the object in Song Ning's hand. "That is Qiqi's jade pendant. Why are you holding it?"

Song Ning froze and stared at him in shock, "Qiqi's? What is Qiqi's? How could it be Qiqi's?" She took a step forward and held out the jade pendant before him, "Did you read the letter I sent you? Have you forgotten that this is the token I gave you, forgot what happened between us in the snowy mountain at Canglu Ye..."

She wanted to continue on, but Liu Qiqi suddenly held on the Shen An's sleeve and shook her head furiously.

The cold light in his eyes flickered, and he broke her off impatiently, "5,000 Jiang citizens died beneath Li swords in the Battle of Canglu Ye. Although our two countries are at peace now, I will never dare forget what happened at Canglu Ye." He sneered at her, "If Qiqi had not saved me then, I would only be a wandering soul in this world – how would I have been able to marry Song Ning, the Princess Jingwu of Li?"

Liu Qiqi was holding onto Shen An's hand while still shaking her head. Her tears streaked freely down her cheeks, ruining her makeup.

Song Ning could not believe it. Her voice came shakily out of her throat, “How could she have saved you... The person who saved you... that was definitely me.”

She thought that as long as she could explain, he would definitely understand; but she had overestimated his ability to understand. Because life is not as such: just because you can speak does not mean the other person would necessarily listen. If the other person had already stuffed his ears with cotton, then he would not hear you no matter how hard you tried.[1]

His continued to sneer at her, “What rot are you spouting? You saved me? Song Ning, I have never heard that you knew any medical knowledge. The woman who saved me had outstanding medical skills and could not speak. That woman is Qiqi. Did you think that just because Qiqi is mute, I will believe you when you try to frame her with your bullshit of a story?”

Song Ning knew then that he did not read her letter, and already understood where the letter had ended up. It is now useless for her to continuing pursuing this matter, but her heart could not let it go. Although Shen An did not love her, there are still some things she must let him know. But everything she said was wrong; for all her efforts, Shen An did not give her a chance. He was a strict man with uncompromising beliefs. This truly made one angry and sad at the same time!

She gave up trying to explain to him. The way he looked at her was always icy cold. He was never willing to try to listen. At the beginning, she was very upset but could not shed any tears; she would often hold her covers and sit woodenly until dawn. In the long nights, she would frequently reminisce of how his hand lightly rested on her shoulder, of how he gently said to her, “If Miss have no objections, I will definitely come to offer for your hand when my injuries healed.”

That was the only beautiful memory she had. Although she may seem strong, she was in the end, still a woman. The stronger a woman, the more important it is to protect her, for something that is too strong will become brittle.

No one could have imagined that within three months of his marriage, Shen An would take a concubine.

There is nothing wrong with the practice of polygamy, mainly because it is

customary to do so. With the emperor leading the charge, his subjects follow his example of taking multiple wives. Men who do not do so are often looked down upon. Jun Wei, who has made a study of the emperor's household affairs, analysed it as such: an emperor takes consorts and concubines because the empress is the Mother of the Nation and also represented the people. Just imagine living with the Mother of the Nation; each time you see her kindly face, you would be reminded of your citizens – you can't even put even put down the affairs of the state when you're in the midst of your private business. How can a man relax unless he takes on concubines?

But we will never know the true reason. Perhaps it is because of their lust that men continue to take on concubines. But in Shen An's case, everyone was certain that he did so for love. And for this sole reason, this was something that Song Ning could not tolerate.

So Song Ning borrowed the name of the Duke of Lizhuang and the pride of the State of Li, and stopped them from proceeding with their wedding plans.

She sat in the pavillion reading a book, while Shen An stood before her. This was the third time they met after their wedding. He frowned deeply as he towered over her, "You had deliberately schemed to prevent me from marrying Qiqi – what is it that you want?"

She put down her book and looked up at him. It was as if she had transformed back to her younger self, before she was married – into the Song Ning who always wore a smile into battle. Her voice was flat but a dimple appeared next to her mouth, "What is it that I want? This is a good question indeed. I do not want anything, but there are somethings that Liu Qiqi is not qualified to have."

He responded coldly, "So you cannot tolerate Qiqi. However, do you actually think I can tolerate you?"

The dimple in her cheek deepened, "Shen An – you cannot but tolerate me because ultimately, our marriage represents the peace unity of our two states."

His face took on the expression of him trying to rein in his anger, "We had agreed not to interfere with each other on our wedding night."

She looked at her own hand and said softly, "This is actually a trifling matter. It's only that I am unhappy watching you both behaving so lovingly while I am

leading such a lonely life since our marriage.”

Shen An sneered back as he strode away, “Song Ning, don’t you remember who it was who propose this marriage?”

Song Ning watch him disappear around a corner. After a moment, she picked up her book and looked down at it. The wind blew past and a single tear fell on the page smudging the ink instantly. She raised her sleeve to wipe the corner of her eye while casually turning the page at the same time.

Not long thereafter, the ruler of the neighbouring State of Xia passed away, and was succeeded by his son. Two months later, the new ruler of Xia launched a military attack on Jiang on the pretext that Jiang was harbouring treasonous rebels from Xia. The Duke of Jiangmu ordered Shen An to lead the troops to defend the State.

The lush fragrance of April was coming to an end, a cold and barren moon hung in the sky. Song Ning stood at the foot of her bed for half the night and watched the moon slowly descend towards the horizon. In the end, she was still unable to bear the thought of him dying on the battlefield. While he was not a good husband, he is the hero that she fell in love at first sight half a year ago. The saying that “while some people do not have much experience in love, they have a romantic soul” aptly describes Song Ning here.

She took out her suit of armor that accompanied her to Jiang as part of her dowry and removed the huxing jing[1] from its breastplate. Her skirts trailed behind her as she walked down the corridors towards Shen An’s personal apartments.

The maidservant in the garden mumbled for a minute before she said, “The General... The General is not in his chambers.”

Song Ning’s expression remained unchanged, “Is he at Hefeng Yuan[2]?”

The maidservant hung her head, fearing to speak.

Song Ning passed the silk-wrapped huxing jing to the maidservant, “Since he is not here, then pass this...”

Before she could finish her sentence, the maidservant in front of her raised her

head and said in surprise, "General!"

Shen An entered the courtyard. The sky had not brightened and his silhouette was framed by the faint yellow light emitted by the few lanterns that hung in the courtyard. She heard his voice come from behind her, strong and cold, "What are you doing here?"

She turned around and stood straight, her gaze sweeping his form from head to toe, and gave a short laugh. She handed him the cloth-wrapped item, "Nothing much. I heard that you will be going into battle, so I came to bring you this huxing jing that is made of pine stone. It is much stronger than normal ones and have saved my life many times. Since I will never go into battle again, do take this along with you and try it out for yourself."

He frowned and looked at her, "I heard that this is your treasure, given to you by your brother."

Song Ning looked up, "Eh – You've also heard of that? It can be said to be a treasure but only if it can protect its wearer's life. If it can't protect someone's life, then it is nothing. By loaning it to you, I don't mean for you to owe me any favours. You said it well, we should each keep out of each other's way. But as I have taken on your name, if you die in battle, then the responsibility for your entire Shen household will fall on me – that is too tiring. Each should bear his own responsibility. Don't you agree?"

She passed him the jade green huxing jing that resembled a spread out lotus leaf. As she turned to leave, he grabbed at her, "You can remarry."

She looked down at his hand that held her sleeve before turning her gaze upwards to him and smiled, "What?"

He let go of her sleeve, "If I die in battle, you can remarry."

She bowed her head and thought for a moment before replying, "Yes. That is true." She raised her head again, her dimple deepening, "Then why don't you just die and never return. Don't ever return again."

The maidservant at the side trembled from fear. Song Ning only laughed in reply, her eyes cold.

This is why one should never try to fathom the heart of a woman; you can

guess left and right and still not understand her. There is a type of woman who can make you fantasize wildly with her every word and there is another type of woman who would make you ponder her every word. The former is represented by skilled courtesans and the latter is represented by Song Ning.[3]

Song Ning left in a hurry, finally able to be the one to first turn her back on him. His fingers wrapped themselves around the hu xin jing as he stared thoughtfully at her departing figure – her spine ramrod straight.

Shen An left home for two months.

Sometime in mid-August, the news came that Miss Qiqi was pregnant. Old General Shen and his lady-wife were left speechless. Liu Qiqi was a guest in their house; not only was their female guest carrying their son's child, but to have it happen before their daughter-in-law – the elderly couple really did not know what to say.

When Song Ning went to pay her respects to her mother-in-law one day, the elder Lady Shen finally said, "However it may be, that is still a child of the Shen family – it would be unseemly for the child to be left uncared for outside."

Song Ning nodded with a smile, "You're right, Mother."

By the end of the month, osmanthus flowers were in full bloom at the top of Mount Qu outside the city. Song Ning stared at the mountain before summoning Shi Cha, her maid who had accompanied her from Li, "Invite Miss Qiqi to accompany me tomorrow to admire the osmanthus blooms on Mount Qu."

When Shi Cha sent the invitation to Hefeng Yuan, Liu Qiqi accepted the invitation.

The next day, Song Ning packed lightly and was accompanied only by Shi Cha. Shi Cha carried a snack box in one hand and a cloak in the other. Compared to Song Ning, Liu Qiqi arrived in a grand procession. She sat in a sedan chair carried by four men and was accompanied by two senior matrons and four maids from Hefeng Yuan.

"Such a crowd just to look at some osmanthus flowers – the mood has been ruined," Song Ning said.

The senior matron in the lead replied faintly, “Lady Shen, you may not be aware but General’s letter arrived yesterday exhorting us to take care of Miss Qiqi’s wellbeing. Since Miss Qiqi is in a delicate condition, your servant must take the the utmost care and precaution not to slight Miss Qiqi.”

Song Ning continued to waved her fan without speaking.

Shi Cha chuckled sarcastically, “Listen to what you are saying! You say you cannot slight Miss Qiqi, but is it alright to slight my Princess then? To put it bluntly, back in our State of Li, if the Princess were sitting, none in attendance would dare stand. If the Princess were standing, everyone in attendance would be kneeling until the Princess gives her permission to do otherwise. But here in Jiang, everything is in reverse! Today, my Princess has decided to hike up this mountain on foot. What kind of etiquette does Jiang promote that your miss can sit comfortably in her sedan chair?”

The matron immediately knelt heavily on the ground and started slapping her own face.

The sedan chair’s curtain lifted up, and Liu Qiqi quickly got down to protect the matron. Her hands that carried a light herbal fragrance gestured elegantly in the air. The matron beside her explained gingerly, “Miss is saying that she will not be riding the sedan chair. She didn’t know any better earlier. She will follow my Lady and serve my Lady on this trip.”

How could a pregnant woman take hiking up small mountain paths for an entire day? That night itself, they heard that Liu Qiqi was bleeding uncontrollably from between her legs. Early morning of the next day, news came that Liu Qiqi had miscarried.

Shi Cha asked worriedly, “What should we do if General gets angry after learning about this?” Song Ning who was reading next to the window and only gestured for her to bring a fresh pot of tea.

Ultimately, it was Song Ning’s fault that Liu Qiqi lost her child. But as the child was conceived out of wedlock, even if Old General Shen and his lady wife pitied her, there was nothing much they were able to do. They could only send her material goods as a gesture of support; bird’s nest, ginseng, snow lotus seeds – whatever that was expensive was sent to Hefeng Yuan.

But Liu Qiqi continued to bathe her face with her tears every day and was unable to find time to eat; in order not to waste the food, her matrons and maids helped to finish all the food. The result was that except for Liu Qiqi who preserved her slender figure, everyone else in Hefeng Yuan put on a lot of weight within a short period of time. Even the pair of little sparrows outside her door were not spared from this fate.

During this time, Song Ning did not leave her rooms or meet anyone on the pretext that she was ill.

But ultimately, there was one person whom she could not avoid seeing. He is her unlucky star. For him, she shed her armour to put on bright red wedding finery and, with all of her tenderness, came a long way to marry him. But he did not want her.

In mid-September, Shen An returned amidst much pomp and circumstance having fought a victorious war.

Song Ning was feeding the fish in the pond when she asked Shi Cha, “He has returned. Do you think he would kill me?”

The cup in Shi Cha’s hand fell to the ground. Song Ning gave a short laugh, “Although my skills are not as good as his, it is not so bad that he can kill me that easily. In the worst case scenario, we will fight until both of us are seriously injured – you don’t have to worry about me.”

Shi Cha knelt on the ground and said beggingly, “Shi Cha knows that her princess is unhappy here. Since Princess is so unhappy, why don’t we return to Li? Princess – let’s go home to Li.”

Song Ning looked at the fish bobbing up and down the surface of the water to get to the feed, “This marriage represents an alliance between two states. Do you think we can leave just because we want to leave?”

The point of no return came that night. I could say this because I saw everything in its entirety; I saw that Song Ning’s slow path towards her end begun that night. It was her love and Shen An’s hand that pushed her towards her death.

He was still in his white armour, his face was the same as when they had first met except that one can see furious anger in his eyes, like a malevolent spirit from the underworld.

She was no match for him after all – the tip of his sword was already at her throat within two strikes. In her panic, she wrapped her hand around his blade. In one thrust, the blade bit into flesh of the fingers on her right hand, leaving a wound so deep one could see the bone. Her blood dripped down from his blade. It must have been very painful, but she did not seem to care. She only looked at her hand, “You... really wanted to kill me?”

He said coldly, “Song Ning, your hands are stained with the life of my son. When you forced Qiqi to climb Mount Qu, did you never think that she could have killed?”

She raised her head suddenly, her expression relaxed and her voice was light, “That is not my fault. I have never carried a child, so how would I know that a pregnant woman was so frail that she can miscarry just from climbing a mountain? You are blaming me for yourself not fated to have that child. Shen An, aren’t you being unreasonable here?”

Song Ning did not really believe what she was saying, but was saying it out her anger. “Shen An, you know that no other woman has the right to give birth to the heir of the Shen family except for me.”

She thought that her love was already dying. In the past, when she looked at Shen An, she hoped that all he wished would come true. Now, when she looked at him, all she wanted was everything to go against him. But just because his misery did not seem to make her happier; this was truly hurting oneself while hurting others.

Her words seemed to anger him further. She saw the overwhelming fury in his eyes and concluded that he will thrust his sword through her hand and into her throat. But her conclusion was wrong.

Shen An’s sword did not advance another inch. Instead, he withdrew it from within her fingers in a spray of blood. His blade pressed against her chest and cut the ties holding her clothes together.

This man – her husband – stood in front of her and used his blood stained

sword to cut her outer robe from her body. The anger in his eyes turned into a cold sneer, his voice filled with mockery, “Song Ning, I have never met a woman as hateful as you.”

It was a consummation that was late by 9 months.

She tried to struggle. If the man was a weak scholar, not only could she have escaped, she could even given him a good beating. But the man before her was a general, skilled in the 18 types of martial arts and excelled in close-body combat. She was helpless before him.

The night air was as cold as the waters of an icy pond. She shivered while both her hands held on the Shen An’s back, her blood creating red flower-like patterns against his tanned skin. She could no longer maintained her smiling facade and her tears flowed down her cheeks. Her voice rang in his ears, the whimpering of a small animal.

She had lost her parents when she was still young and grew up in battlefields. Her brother had little time to take care of her, so everytime she fell down, she would pick herself up and gently rubbed where it hurt. The Song Ning in the battlefields was always smiling because she was matured enough to know that she shouldn’t worry her brother. Over time, it became a habit – until she no longer knew how to cry.

This is the first time she was crying aloud; this terrified herself because this time, she could really feel pain, and the pain was in her heart – she could not even do as she did when she was young, to just rub where it hurts with her hand. She panted heavily until even the tip of her nose had turned red. She could no longer maintain her usual stern composure, and could no longer will herself to stay strong. She was only 17. Her voice was on the brink of utter devastation, “Shen An, you really hate me, you really hate me so. Shen An, let me go. I beg you – let me go.”

But he said into her ear, “Can your pain compared to my pain of losing my child? Song Ning – this is what you wanted so I am giving you what you wanted. But from now on, we are squared. Do you understand what squared means?”

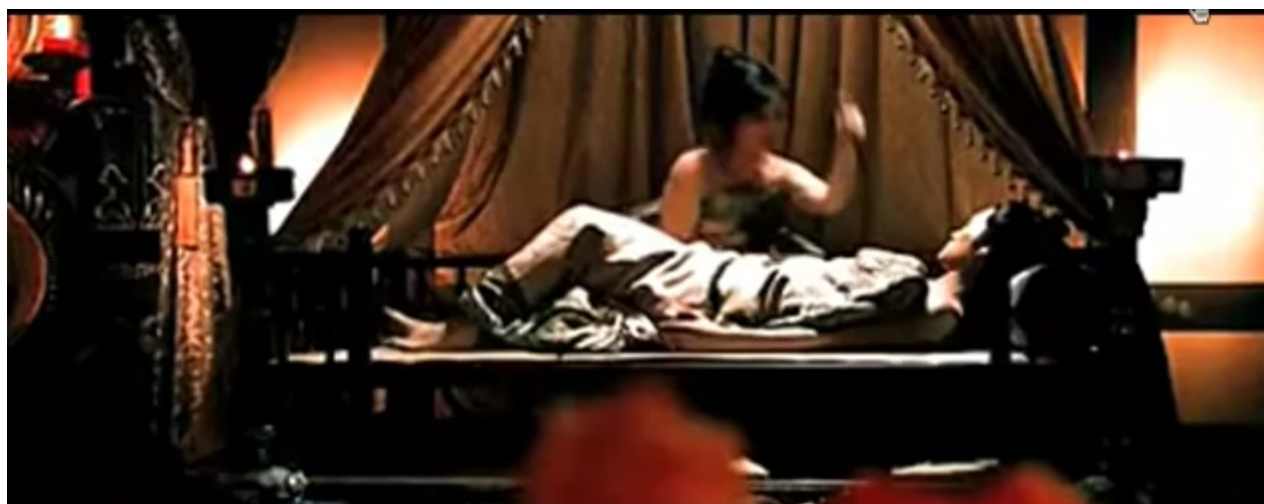
The smell of blood permeated the air. I could not smell it, but I could see it. Her fingers had pressed deep into his back, but she could no longer cry aloud. Her

hoarse voice hung in the air, “Shen An, how could you do this to me. You are heartless.”

Song Ning’s right hand was ruined that night. The same hand that used to handle a spear, that was able to execute the forty-nine strokes of the Purple Spear Stances so beautifully that all who saw marvelled at her skills. The wound in her hand was also carved deep within her heart.

When she woke up, Shen An lay next to her. His handsome features were indifferent, but slightly frowning. She thought, this is the man I used to love – the man she fell for at first sight amidst a sea of people.

His sword had fallen under the bed. Her right hand was already useless, so she leaned over and picked up the heavy sword with her left hand; this woke him up. In the instant he opened his eyes, she plunged the sword deep into his side, between the ribs. He gave a low grunt and saw a single tear fall from the corner of her eye down her face, leaving a glistening streak in its wake.



In the past, she had found him buried beneath thousands of corpses, she had carried him on her back across a mountain for three days without sleep nor rest to bring him to a clinic. But all these were in the past, so there was no need to dwell on it anymore.

She cocked her head and finally looked at him with an expression befitting a young girl. Her face was tear-streaked, but her lips were tilted upwards, “Shen An, why did you come back? Why didn’t you die in battle?”

He held her left hand that was still wrapped around his sword when he suddenly pulled her down and hugged her. The sharp sword pierced deeper into his side and he spat out a mouthful of blood before he said coldly into her ear,

“Is this what you wanted? You wanted me to die?”

When Song Ning told me this part of the story, even though so many years have passed since, I could still see pain seep into her otherwise calm features, as if she is unable to recall what had happened. She did not know that I had already seen everything. That surely must have had been a night from hell for her.

Shen An survived in the end. Although his wound was deep, it had unfortunately not cut into any critical points as well. The doctor advised that he would fully recovery with 3 months of quiet bed rest.

Two months later, Song Ning was found to have conceived. Liu Qiqi packed her things and quietly left the Shen Mansion. When news arrived the next day, Shen An immediately went out to look for her although he was still seriously injured. When he found her, he installed her in a secondary estate. He himself stayed at that estate throughout most of the year, and ceased to call the Shen Mansion home.

In the June of the next year, Song Ning gave birth to a baby boy.

Shen An picked up the infant, “You hate me.” He looked in the direction of the bed with its curtains down, “I thought you would be unwilling to give birth to this child.” Song Ning was lying weakly on the bed behind the curtains, but she mustered up a single breath to reply sarcastically, “Why wouldn’t I give birth to him? This is the heir to the Shen family. When you die, he will be the one to inherit.”

His eyes immediately turned cold. He passed the infant over to the old nanny by the side and left angrily. The child cried loudly behind him and he stopped by the door. After a moment’s pause, he said, “Song Ning, there is no woman in this world who would look forward to her husband dying in battle.” Her voice came softly from behind layers of curtains, “Oh?”

Four years passed in a blink of an eye. During this time, the two State of Li and Jiang had once again fell out and started fighting ceaselessly. This was bad for my business, although not relevant to our story at hand. What was important was that Liu Qiqi had given birth to the another child during this time – a little girl.

This was actually the source of much sadness in the secondary estate for quite

a while. Because I was stood firmly on Song Ning's side, I could not help but think that Liu Qiqi's despair must be because a girl would not stand to inherit much of the family's wealth. But this was only my conjecture – it may be that she regretted not being able to bear a son because Shen An liked boys.

The nannies in the estate repeatedly consoled Liu Qiqi, that it was already very good that she could safely deliver a little girl under Song Ning's watch. It was only a long time they successfully consoled her, and made her understand that it was not easy to have this girl. This assuaged half of her sadness. At the same time, Shen An truly loved and doted on their child and this assuaged the other half of her sadness.

I could not help but think that she had transformed her sadness into hope in such a short time because Shen An had redistributed a substantial amount of his private wealth to her. If Jun Wei were present, he would surely criticize that my thinking is too negative, and not optimistic enough. But I thought, if I could still look to the bright side under these circumstances, then I would have already attained sainthood.

Song Ning's son, who was named Shen Luo, grew to look very much like her.

Shen Luo had a shallow dimple in his cheek. When he was two or three, he could already recite complex books. If he was met with a difficult question that he could not answer, he would not allow anyone to help him. Instead, he would sit there and with his plump fists under his chin and contemplate the question seriously. In winter, although it was more difficult for him to maintain the same position because of his thick clothing, he would still stubbornly insist on doing so even though he had slid from the chair countless times as a result. He did not cry when he hurt himself. Instead he would just pick himself up and rub the spot that was in pain. In this regard, he was exactly like Song Ning.

Although Shen Luo was very clever, but he did not recognise his own father. Basically, each time they met, he would call Shen An "Uncle" instead of "Father". This showed that he really had little chance to meet with Shen An, and one could also see that his mother seldom saw Shen An as well. It was difficult know whether such an intelligent child truly did not recognise his own father, or if he was just pretending. But this adorable and lovable child passed away the winter when he turned four.

That day, Shen An had brought his daughter to pay their respects to his parents. The little girl ran away from the servants and met Shen Luo in the garden where she was playing. For whatever reason, both children got into a fight and both fell into the lotus pond. When they were rescued, both appeared fine.

However, because Shen Luo was suffering from a cold at that time, the dip in the icy pond worsened his illness. He contracted high fever for a couple of nights and before dawn on the third night, he closed his reddened eyes, coughed lightly, and passed away.

Perhaps this was the event that truly defeated Song Ning.

I saw the sun rise that winter morning. Shen Luo laid in Song Ning's arms, his face still flushed as if he was just asleep. She held him in her arms as she sat in the hall. The beaded curtain was tied up, allowing the morning light to fall on both of them.

She raised his little head, "Son – the sun has risen. Haven't you been complaining that you haven't seen the sun for half a month, and even your blankets have also grown moldy? Quickly wake up and take your blankets out to air." But he could no longer wake up. Her tears fell from her face onto his closed eyes, making it appear that the child was crying after witnessing his mother's sadness.

Shen An was hurrying into the garden when he saw Song Ning come out of the hall carrying her purple spear. Her white dress suited her sharp beauty but her usually smiling face no longer held any expression. She was like a red lotus that bloomed in the midst of ice and snow. She was such a beautiful woman.

Her spear darted quickly towards Shen An in a rush of cold wind. She had even calculated where he would evade to. She wanted to end all their love and hate in that one strike. What she did not expect that he stood still and watched the spear fly towards him. As a result, her spear did not hit its mark. He steadied himself and grabbed on to her hand, "Ah Ning."

She looked at him, as if she had never known him, "Why is it that my son had to die but you are all alive, that you and Liu Qiqi are still alive?"

I have never heard a sadder question in my life.

Her spear had sliced into Shen An's clothes, leaving a shallow cut. She stared at the insignificant wound and struggled to free her left hand unsuccessfully from his grasp. In the end, she released that pent-up knot pressing beneath her heart and spat out mouthfuls of blood, staining the front of her white dress red. Shen An quickly moved to carry her as she collapsed in front of him.

Song Ning fell into a deep illness.

And after that, it was as the rumours said.

The story came to an end. Today, Song Ning laid on the rattan bed in the pavillion, her expression distant as if she had finally saw past everything. She summarized the past 7 years in a single sentence. "Jun Fu, it is so easy to love someone. It is also so easy to hate someone."

I quite disagreed with her. It was quite difficult for me to fall in love with Mu Yan. If he had not saved my life twice, we would have been like two specks of dust passing each other by in life. Let us not say whether I would fall in love with him; I may not have even have given him a chance even if he had loved me first.

But since I had fallen in love with him, I would not give him any chance to hurt me, or let myself hate him. Of course, this argument was presupposed on me actually being alive. However, I am now a dead person, so this can only remain an opinion that can be debated sometimes...

Actually, to my mind, the entire tragedy stemmed from Shen An's steadfastness towards love. If he was not such a faithful man, it was possible to achieve a compromise between the three of them, instead of this bitter ending where one must die in order for the other to live.

As I made to leave, Song Ning said tiredly, "Now that I think about it, perhaps from the beginning, I had only fallen in love with a figment of imagination."

I nodded in agreement.

She asked me softly, "Jun Fu, can you create this illusion for me in my dream?"

As the sun set in the west, I made some quick calculations. I nodded my head, "Will two days be enough for you to put your affairs in order? Two days later, we will meet in this pavillion and I will weave a good dream for you."

Translation Notes:

[1] A’Fu actually described it more comically. The chinese phrase for “communicate” is “沟通” which combination of the characters “tunnel” and “lead to / connect”. What she literally says goes along the lines of “just because there is a tunnel, does not mean you would be able to connect. For example, [it won’t work] if someone had put a crocodile at the mouth of the tunnel, just waiting to kill you when you try to swim through.” Of course, this description doesn’t work if you do not understand the chinese phrase, so I substituted it with the closest analogy I could think of.

[2] “护心镜” (pinyin: Huxin jing) usually describes a small circular shield that is worn at the chest area to protect the heart.

[3] This is actually a pun on two similar sounding phrases: “想得非非” (pinyin: xiang de fei fei) translates to “fantasize wildly” while “非得想想” (pinyin: fei dei xiang xiang) means “must ponder or think about”

Commentary

So we finally come to the end of Song Ning retelling of her life. Translating this made me hate Liu Qiqi more... and yes, its difficult to accept Shen An’s hurtfulness towards Song Ning.

Shen An is a character that makes me see saw in my opinion of him. As I translated this chapter, he made me grit my teeth and seethe in anger. Then I try to see it from his perspective, and he probably had cause to be angry. But like Jun Fu, we are all firmly on Song Ning’s side, so I can only say that we might be biased.

And then that rape scene came. And let me just set the record very straight, rape – including marital rape – is never ok. No means no! Rape is a despicable act that violates a woman physically and emotionally, it takes away her dignity in the cruellest manner possible. And for this, I decide I can never forgive Shen An. I would understand if he had hurt her physically (which he did anyway) and it would be less unforgivable if he had killed her outright.

I had mentioned once on this blog that Song Ning herself was a difficult woman to love. She is stubborn and ruthless – as can be seen to how she treated Qiqi (who totally deserved it anyway). But the one thing that made me still love her is because when she love – even if it was only a figment of her imagination – she loved so unconditionally.

And one last thing – as I was translating the scene of Song Ning and Liu Qiqi hiking up Mount Qu, I could not help but keep thinking that Song Ning should have just pushed Liu Qiqi off the cliff right there. Hah!

P/S I just watched the HXY trailer. It seems that Drama!Qiqi is a lot more devious than Book!Qiqi. So more hate on her! And Drama!Song Ning is even more pitiful than Book!Song Ning (because it is suggested in the trailer that Qiqi frames her for the miscarriage) – I am not sure if I like that.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 4.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 4.1

[April 20, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [25 Comments](#)



First of all, thank you for all of your comments to Chapter 3.2. Never in my wildest imagination did I foresee such passionate analysis of Song Ning and Shen An's story. I appreciate everyone's views and I hope we can have another round of debates when we finish the Song Ning and Shen An arc.

And then.... nothing happens in this chapter post, except a lot of characterization and cute between Jun Fu, Jun Wei and Xiao Lan. We get to know Jun Fu a lot better in this chapter from her thoughts on Song Ning's story and also her interactions with the other characters.

Dedication: This chapter dedicated to [Decembi](#) :)

Chapter 4.1

Two days later, while we were having breakfast together, I brought up that that today was the day I will be entering Song Ning's dreamscape to fix some of her regrets, would Xiao Lan be able to go in with me? Xiao Lan had not had the opportunity to show off his skills because our journey to Jiang has been so smooth; he must be feeling disappointed indeed.

If he follows me into the dreamscape this time, we would likely meet with unforeseen circumstances and he will surely have an opportunity to rescue me from danger. This will cure his disappointment and allow him to make good the promise he made to me 16 days and 8 hours ago.

As soon as I finished speaking, the three other people at the table dropped their chopsticks. Xiao Lan displayed some quick reflexes here; with a wave of his sleeve, he managed to collect everyone's chopsticks before they hit the ground.

Jun Wei was surprised because I had invited Xiao Lan into Song Ning's dreamscape, but did not ask him. After all, he was the swordsman Master Jun sent to protect me.

I had my reasons for making this decisions. Although Jun Wei called himself a swordsman, he was usually too preoccupied with writing stories. Often, he would be inspired in the middle of a fight and unilaterally decide to that the fight had ended, leaving his companions behind to run off to a secluded area to continue his creative writing. This is the reason why although Xiao Huang is a pet tiger, he sometimes even more savage than a wild tiger; he had lost count the number of times an inspired Jun Wei had run off without him, leaving him in the midst of a crowd of swords and a rain of arrows.

From this, one could see that the unluckier one was, the greater the risks of having Jun Wei protect oneself, because danger and disaster was as unpredictable as the arrival of inspiration. So if one had other options, even Xiao Huang would not choose Jun Wei, let alone myself who was not particularly skilled at fighting.

Even though I thought so deep in my heart, I could not deal such a blow to Jun

Wei's self-esteem. I thought for a while before saying to him, "The most important job is for you to stay and protect my qin. Think about it – what will happen if everyone has entered Song Ning's dreamscape and someone takes the opportunity to destroy my qin?"

Jun Wei paused and thought deeply after hearing my explanation. After a while, he turned around and slowly instructed Xiao Lan, "Even though the place you are going is just a dreamscape created by Ah Fu for Song Ning, but in this dream – Ah Fu and yourself are real. If you are injured in the dream, then you would be injured in reality; if you die in the dream, then you would be dead in reality as well. Take utmost care; it is nothing if you die, but you must protect Ah Fu carefully."

Xiao Lan did not say a word. Instead, he reached out and picked up the last Crystal Jade Dumpling from the steamer. I swallowed. His chopsticks paused in midair as he looked towards me and asked with a faint smile, "Does Miss Jun like this?"

I looked at the dumpling in between his chopsticks and reluctantly shook my head.

The bamboo chopsticks swiftly changed directions and in a blink of an eye, the dumpling was resting on my plate before me. His gesture was so elegant and refined, it would not look out of place at any great banquet.

I was actually not that interested in the dumpling. I used to like it when I was alive, so I was just reminiscing the taste of it earlier. Since I no longer had any sense of taste, it would be a waste for me to eat it, so I could only move to return it back to him.

Just as my chopsticks carrying the dumpling hovered about Xiao Lan's bowl of soup, Jun Wei suddenly shouted, "What are you all doing? Did you all hear what I just said?"

I was startled by his shout and the dumpling slid off my chopsticks into the soup. Xiao Lan pulled me back just in time. "Pa" it went in and vegetables flew everywhere.

Jun Wei's white robe was now splattered with soup and vegetables. He looked angrily at me.

Xiao Lan stared back at Jun Wei and said solemnly, “I have already committed Brother Jun’s worlds to memory. It is nothing if I die, but I must protect Miss Jun carefully.”

Jun Wei gritted his teeth, “You don’t need to protect her already; you can just kill her off now!”

“That... wouldn’t be good,” I said.

Xiao Lan cast a faint smile in my direction and was about to speak with Zhi Su who had been silent all this while finally spoke up, “Miss Jun is a skilled illusionist. It has been a while since we have seen such in the East...”

“She comes from a poor family. It is not surprising that she would learn a few illusion tricks to earn a bit of money?” Jun Wei interrupted her.

An odd expression came onto Zhi Su’s face.

Xiao Lan looked at me smilingly, “A poor family? To earn a bit of money?”

I cast one look at Jun Wei, considered his expression, and felt that it was best not to go against the background he had created for me, “Yes...”

Zhi Su: “...”

Xiao Lan: “...”

After breakfast, Jun Wei went to his room to change his clothes. Zhi Su also left without a word. This left Xiao Lan and myself waiting in the hall. We sat on the rosewood chairs and contemplated how we could make Shen An fall in love with Song Ning in the dreamscape.

The dreamscape created by the Hua Xu Melody was known as the Hua Xu Realm. This Realm could only recreate the past, so it was impossible to create the Shen An in Song Ning’s imagination. Our objective in entering Song Ning’s Hua Xu Realm is to change the past and prevent the tragic events from happening again so that Song Ning can live happily ever after without sorrow in the dreamscape. However, the question is how do we achieve this happily ever after without sorrow? The root of her suffering is the desire in her heart.

I thought, perhaps we could kidnap Song Ning at the battle of Canglu Ye; this way she would not be able to rescue Shen An and Shen An would have died a

useful death. But this differed greatly from Song Ning's wishes. I was wondering if we should take the risk.

Just as I was dealing with my internal struggle, Xiao Lan interrupted my train of thought. He studied my seven stringed qin for a moment and asked, "Earlier, Miss Jun mentioned that there would be trouble if this qin were to be destroyed?"

I absent-mindedly made a sound in agreement.

He then asked with interest, "What sort of trouble?" If this qin were to be destroyed, would the Hua Xu Realm created by playing it similarly be destroyed?"

I froze for a moment; I could not understand why he could have such terrifying thoughts. I shook my head and replied, "No. Only that if this qin were to be destroyed, I will have to spend two pieces of gold to buy another one."

He looked at me without a word.

The air around us fell silent.

After a while, his handsome face broke into a smile. The smile was so beautiful that it hurt my eyes.

He said with a laugh, "Miss Jun really... reminds me of another girl I know."

I felt slightly unhappy after hearing him say that. It reminded of how I once heard a blacksmith tried to sweet-talk to his wife by telling her that she looked like the famous actress, Zhang Baizhi from the State of Chao, but wound up having his wife chase him down seven streets with a spade. Zhang Baizhi was beautiful enough to topple cities and kingdoms while Mrs Liu's height was six feet two and weighed 210 pounds.

The truth is that all women did not wish to have beauty that could topple cities and kingdoms, but only hoped to be one of a kind. I thought, if my husband in the future spoke the same words as Xiao Lan today, I would surely make him kneel on washboards[1]. But as soon as I finished that thought, I realised that I had thought too much. If I could have a husband in the future, then that husband could only be Jun Wei, and Jun Wei never learnt his lessons even after being punished to kneel on washboards.

Slightly after 7 in the morning, the four of us and a tiger arrived at the little pavillion.

Song Ning looked much better than two days ago. Her hair was put up in a high bun and adorned with silk flowers. A disc of white jade inlaid in silver rested on her forehead. I wondered where had I ever seen her look like this. It struck me a while later: I saw it in her memories through the Hua Xu Diao two days ago. She looked like this on her wedding night, except that instead of wearing a red wedding dress, she was wearing a plain white dress today.

I asked, "You... like this..."

She laughed, "I still must dress properly before I could go see him."

I knew who she was talking about. It was the Shen An she fell in love with. The Shen An who unhorsed her at Shanyang Pass in the winter of the seventeenth year of the Duke of Li's reign; the Shen An who told her in the mountain cave at Canglu Ye, "If Miss have no objections, I will definitely come to offer for your hand when your injuries have healed."

Song Ning's greatest mistake was that her experience with man was limited to only Shen An, so when she lost him it was as if she had lost everything. This made her unable to let go even in the face of death. If she had another man in her life, then in the worst case scenario, losing him would only be lessening the burdens of her life. I could not continue to imagine this scenario any further; any further then this would evolved into a female-oriented feature article.

Song Ning said to me, "Jun Fu, would it be too greedy of me if I were to ask to reunite with Luo'er? If he were still alive, he would be turning six next month. I don't know how he would look like now, but he was really adorable when he was alive."

I uncovered my seven-stringed qin while consoling her softly, "My purpose here is to make your desires come true. I will let the two of you reunite. We will go out now while you lie here and have a good sleep. Once you are asleep, I will come and weave a dream for you."

Song Ning quickly fell asleep. Her words had steadied my heart. I thought, in the end, I must still take that risk.

The lotus pond was covered with jade green leaves with a few closed lotus buds dotting the surface. The servants had already set up my qin on one side. I was experimentally plucking at my qin to tune the instrument when I saw Jun Wei cover his ears. He did not know that my skills had greatly improved. I did not like practicing the qin in the past because I did not know who I was playing for. My master was elderly, so he would usually start yawning within a quarter of the hour.

Jun Wei would always want to start playing when he saw me play. I, on the other hand, could not help fantasizing violently about hitting him over his head with my qin as soon as I see him pluck at his. After Mu Yan appeared, even though I did not know his face and could not remember his voice, I could not forget the image of him playing the qin in the moonlight and that music which I had never heard before continued to linger in my memories. I remembered a line of a poem that went, “the desire to communicate my thoughts through a jade qin”[2]; I put so much effort into practicing the qin thereafter because I wished to express myself by playing for him[3].

Two quarters of the hour after 9 in the morning, just as the sun broke through the clouds to shower the earth in golden light, I began playing Song Ning’s Hua Xu Melody. I had thought that given her strong and stubborn personality and her three years’ experience as a soldier on the battlefield, her Melody must surely be like the sounds of armoured calvary and bloody killing. However, the melody that came from the strings being plucked was the sound of heart-piercing sadness and hidden bitterness.

The Hua Xu Melody was the embodiment of a person’s heart, with his or her life as the score. This was a melody where each note was a bloody tear; one could not imagine how broken Song Ning’s heart was. No matter how strong she was, she was but a woman. She survived the battlefields but was defeated by love in the end.

When I played the last note, mist began to form on the surface of the lotus pond. A faint multicoloured light which can only be seen by the owner of the Pearl, pulsed within the mist.

Xiao Lan looked in the direction of the rockery; I could not tell what he was thinking. I stood up next to my qin and moved towards him in two steps and

grabbed his hand. He looked at me in surprised.

I was about to explain myself to him when Jun Wei cried out, “Men and women should maintain a distance.”

Xiao Lan kept silent.

I kept holding on to his hand.

I was no longer a living person of this world, so the societal rules that govern men and women really meant little to me. However, I could neither ignore Xiao Lan’s thinking, nor could I ignore his female bodyguard, Zhi Su’s. But other than holding on his hand, there was no other way to bring him into Song Ning’s Hua Xu Realm.

Zhi Su had an expression of surprise. She opened her mouth as if to say something, before closing it again decisively. In comparison, Xiao Lan did not overreact at all. But I thought I should still ask for his opinion, “I need to hold your hand for a little while, do you mind?”

He stared at me calmly and raised an eyebrow, “And what if I say I mind?”

I returned his stare calmly, “Then once we return from Song Ning’s dreamscape, you should find a sword and cut off your hand.”

“That is a good suggestion,” Jun Wei interjected, “It befits a strong man.”

“Your head, that is a good suggestion,” I said.

Xiao Lan’s lips curled upwards, “I was just joking. Why would I mind when Miss Jun doesn’t mind either?”

His smile made me suddenly nervous. But we were in the midst of serious business; there was no time to think about irrelevant things. I held on to him as I jumped towards the multicoloured light in the mist floating above the surface of the lotus pond.

If a stranger were to walk by that instant, he surely would have thought that we were holding hands to commit suicide for love. Jun Wei, Zhi Su and Xiao Huang were standing by the side waving goodbye at us, as if they were sending off their loved ones. One really could not imagine how a stranger would feel seeing such a sight.

Translation Notes

[1] Chinese washboards have a zig zag pattern carved into the middle, which makes it painful to kneel on. See picture here: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/Portals/0/attachment/2011/c49b7d18-1f01-441f-bb7a-71a81bf9c2e1.jpeg>

[2] This is from a poem by the Southern Song General Yue Fei, titled 《小重山》 (pinyin. xiao chongshan) (lit. small weighty mountain). The whole line goes, “欲将心事付瑶琴。知音少，弦断有谁听?” (pinyin. yù jiāng xīnshì fù yáo qín. Zhīyīn shǎo, xián duàn yǒu shuí tīng?), which describes someone who wished to communicate his thoughts through his music, but alas, there are few who understand him. And when the strings on his qin breaks, who else would be willing to listen to him? (source: <http://www.exam58.com/scmj/3679.html>)

[3] Jun Fu actually literally says that she wants to play herself for Mu Yan to hear, but that sounds like ALL KINDS of wrong in English. When read with the line of the poem she quoted, she is actually saying she wants to communicate her heart’s desire to him through her music, which is all kinds of sweet.

Commentary

In this chapter, the line from Yue Fei’s poem that Jun Fu quotes asks: there are few who are his 知音 (pinyin. zhiyin), when the string breaks, who would be willing to hear his music. Decembi reminded me that 知音 had multiple meanings. On the most basic level, it literally meant someone who “knows the music”. However, it could also mean a soulmate that will understand your heart. So Jun Fu wants to play for Mu Yan, hoping that he is her 知音.

And so, this chapter post is dedicated to Decembi, who is my literature 知音.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 4.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 4.2

[April 27, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [9 Comments](#)



Argh – I’m in such a rush to finish all my work and pack for my trip to Taiwan, so did not have much time to edit. Please just bear with it – I will do an edit later. Since the translation bit was substantially done, I decided to just post it.

Have fun with Peanuts for the next two weeks.

Behind the multicoloured light lay Song Ning’s Hua Xu Realm. We were in the middle of a bustling town with the winter sun shining atop of us. We could see harsh mountains in the distance, wearing white caps against the blue skies.

The Pearl was cold by nature so I was very susceptible to the cold as well. I sneezed repeatedly as a result of being struck by a cold gust of wind. We had prepared for many things, but had forgotten that while it was the start of summer in the real world, it was deep winter in this Hua Xu Realm. I shivered and

said, “Have you brought any money? We should first go to a clothes shop...” Before I could finish, two heavy fur cloaks appeared before me.

I looked up at Xiao Lan in disbelief.

He pushed the red cloak into my arms while he put on a white one. He looked at my stunned expression and explained, “Miss Jun mentioned at breakfast that it was during winter when Lady Shen saved General Shen. So I told Zhi Su to prepare two sets of winter clothing, never thinking that it might actually come in handy.”

I wrapped the fur cloak around myself as I praised him, “Xiao Lan, you’re so considerate.”

He looked at me, “Mine is no more than average.” He paused a while before saying, “You’ve put it on backwards.”

“.....”



When we finally finished changing, I told Xiao Lan my idea. Our time of arrival now should be around when Song Ning found Shen An in the midst of the mountain of bodies and stayed with him in the mountain cave near Canglu Ye. Everything started from Shen An mistaking the identity of his saviour. Although we could not guarantee that Shen An would wholeheartedly love Song Ning the way he does Liu Qiqi if the first person he saw upon waking up was Song Ning instead of Liu Qiqi, I thought it was worth a gamble.

I drew a timeline to help with our planning. The first thing is to make Song Yan’s subordinates leave the town so that Song Ning can stay by Shen An’s side as he undergoes treatment. The second thing is to prevent Shen An from ever

meeting the mute girl from the clinic, Liu Qiqi so as to remove any possibility of them falling in love.

In Xiao Lan's opinion, the simplest way is to kill the men sent by Song Ning's brother. His expression was relaxed when he proposed this ruthless method, as if killing a person was as easy as stepping on an ant. To be honest, I too thought this would work, except that we were in a mirage created by the Pearl.

The Pearl's magical powers are refined by absorbing the good dreams of others. Of course, the good outcome of a dream also depends on our manipulation. However, methods of manipulation that required violence is not conducive to the refinement of the Pearl. In other words, if we kill Liu Qiqi and the rest in this dream, I could sustain myself for one and a half years on Song Ning's life essence. If we do not kill them, I could sustain myself for three years on Song Ning's life essence. Thus, we should only resort to killing as a last resort. Perhaps I will ultimately have to kill someone within this dreamscape, in order to fulfil my promise to Song Ning, but this is a price of doing business, and also the last resort that I was referring to.

I said to Xiao Lan, "We shouldn't use any extreme methods and instead use a gentler approach. If it is a problem that can be resolved using words, why should we resort to weapons instead? That is too uncivilized."

"In that case, wouldn't that cause delay to our mission?" Xiao Lan mused.

"I am, but a kind-hearted girl," I replied lightly.

Xiao Lan ignored me and entered the nearby restaurant.

Upon enquiring with passer-bys, I learnt that that restaurant is the largest in this small town.

When we reached the second floor, the only table available was by the window, so we sat down there.

I had always fantasized about the seat by the window in a restaurant because, in folktales, this seat has always been occupied by legendary characters. In a tale of romance, seated there would either be a king or a prince. If it was a tale of chivalry, then it would be occupied by the sect leader or chief of a cult. Such legends would always sit by the window when having meals, his long fingers

holding up a wine cup, leaving the world with the image of a beautiful side profile.

I looked around and asked Xiao Lan, “This is such a big restaurant. Why is it that only our table was unoccupied?”

He gestured his chin while pouring the tea.

I did not understand what he was trying to convey, so I guessed, “Could it be that as told in legends, only a legendary person can sit in this legendary position, and because everyone thinks that they are not outstanding enough, they consciously decide to leave this place empty? Hah – everyone is too self conscious.” I promptly broke into a sneeze as soon as I finished.

This time, Xiao Lan gestured towards the window with hand, “The window is broken, so it cannot shut properly.

I looked at him questioningly, “Ah?” I sneezed again.

He passed me a steaming cup of hot tea and said slowly, “The wind outside is so strong. If there are other seats available, I will also be unwilling to sit in the draught.”

“This...” I started sneezing repeatedly before I could finish what I was about to say.

The waiter came up quickly to take our order. Xiao Lan ordered a jug of hot wine. I did not really pay attention to the rest of the order, and only inadvertently overhear him order crystal jade dumplings. After some thought, I suggested, “We already had crystal jade dumplings in the morning. Why don’t we order something else?”

“Don’t you quite like this dish?” Xiao Lan asked.

“Don’t mind me. The key question is: what would you like to eat?” After all, whatever I eat tasted the same – that is tasteless.

Xiao Lan looked up at me. The waiter, with his honeyed tongue, quickly said, “Miss is really understanding and considerate.” I made a small sound in agreement, before drifting back deep into my thoughts.

The question I was pondering on was how to lead Song Yan’s men out of the

town without hurting anyone, and we must first identify Song Yan's men in this sea of people. Although I had glimpsed their figures through Song Ning's Hua Xu Melody, but due to the distance, I could only make out that they were large men. There were so many large men in this town; I could hardly go up to each of them to ask, "Brother, are you from the Li Army? There's something I need to tell you – your mother has asked you to go home for dinner." This method was just too inefficient.

The wine was served quickly. Xiao Lan passed me a cup. Just as I reached out to receive it, he held on to it and refused to let go. I reached out again to grab it when he looked at me and asked quietly, "The young miss was only asking me for directions, why are you sulking?"

I froze for a while and before finally asking cluelessly, "Ah?"

"You're pretending to be clueless again. I really hate it when you pretend to be clueless with me," he said coldly, frowning.

I pointed at my own nose, "Are you talking to me? What young miss are you talking about, I..."

He interrupted me, "The tallish young miss in purple who carried a spear from earlier. Just because I complimented her weapon, you have been giving me attitude. Are you still denying that you are sulking? What are you sulking about?"

I still did not understanding what was going on, "Sulking? But I am not sulking."

The men sitting at the table next to ours suddenly broke out into laughter, "Ah... Someone's pot of vinegar has been knocked over.[1] Brother, your lady is jealous! Who asked you to compliment another girl in front of her... hahaha."

I was still as confused as ever. The commotion had drawn the attention of the rest of the patrons onto us.

"A young miss in purple, tall and carried a spear?" I repeated.

He ignored me, and instead held my hands. His cold expression vanished and was replaced by a slight smile, "Are you really jealous?"

I quietly extracted my hands from his grasp, “I am really not jealous.

Xiao Lan let go of my hand without forcing the subject any further. A group of men had gathered next to our table, blocking our sight of the men at the next table. In front of such a crowd, it was really impossible for him to force the subject any further.

Although the men were dressed in Jiang costumes, their accent and manner of speaking definitely came from Li; we knew that they were in disguise as soon as we heard them speak. The leader gave a simple greeting[2] to Xiao Lan, “Brother mentioned that you have seen a young girl in purple carrying a spear, and that you have given her directions. If you do not mind me asking, where did the young girl wish to go?”

I instantly understood Xiao Lan’s intentions as soon as these men showed up. The young miss that he was speaking off was obvious Song Ning. Anyone who has met her would have instantly recognised the description. He has purposely acted out this scene to attract the attention of the men who were looking for Song Ning. Even after I understood his plan, I could not not help but be slightly stunned by his performance

At this point, he had put on an expression of wariness, and was looking at the men carefully, “How are you related to the young miss in purple?” It was as if he had really met a young girl in purple by coincidence that he quite admired, and he was unconsciously trying to protect her in case the men in front of him were her enemies.

The men looked at each other. The leader finally spoke up, “Frankly, the young lady that you met was most likely our young miss who has run away from home. Our young master is extremely worried about her, so he sent us out to look for her. We would really appreciate it if you could let us know where she was heading to.”

I kept thinking in my heart: tell him, tell him. Just point him in any direction to get them to leave. But Xiao Lan only looked at them in suspicion.

I understood immediately after some thought. He must also want to quickly recite his next line to get the men to leave. However, in order not to raise the men’s suspicions, he had to control himself and be difficult, so that the other

side will be even more trustful.

The man were truly convinced now; they solemnly ask, “Our mission is to retrieve our young miss. Rest easy, brother – if the young lady in purple is not our young miss, we will not make things difficult for her. I swear this on my life.”

Xiao Lan studied the leader’s expression for a long while before he finally said, “If that is the case, it is not good for me to impede your search. Two hours ago, we met the young lady in purple at the foot of Mount Shimen. She enquired about a swordsman surnamed Jing who lived on Mount Tang, and asked for directions to Mount Tang as she would like to pay this swordsman a visit.”

In just that single line, his expression went from the indecisiveness of whether to tell, to a sense of loss when he finally does and also a helpless sense of foreboding for the future. Such excellent acting – it is a pity he cannot join a theatre school[3].

As soon as he finished, the leader mused, “That does sound like what Young Miss would do.” He made a greeting in farewell, led his men away in a hurry and disappeared down the stairs.

Xiao Lan continued to diligently wear an expression of loss tinged with depression. He only dropped it when he ascertained though looking out of the broken window, that they had disappeared into the vast horizon. I turned around to see his face resume his usual relaxed expression as he leisurely poured a cup of wine.

I felt like there are a lot of questions I would like to ask him. Xiao Lan has shown me a very different side of himself; he was no longer the man who was bedridden for two days after a woman stabbed him. The unexpected change was as if I the grape seeds that I had planted suddenly bore a grapefruit. However, since the improvement to the original did not give fruit to a durian or dragonfruit, there did not seem to be anything too wrong with the result, albeit a bit surprising.

I sat down across from him and casually remarked, “Mount Shimen, Mount Tangshan – you are really quite familiar with the surrounding terrain.”

The waiter served a plate of chicken strips cooked in ginger. Xiao Lan looked at the food while he said, “I have studied a little about the battle at Canglu Ye from

seven years ago, and in the course of it, looked up the surrounding terrain.”

“Then you knew that Song Yan’s men would be in this restaurant?” I asked.

He lifted his wine cup and said slowly, “Since they were out on official government business, they would be able to have their expenses reimbursed. It is now lunch time, so they will obviously come to the most expensive restaurant. Have you ever met an official out on government business who will try to save the government money?”

I thought for a while: that is really the case.

When I was still a princess of Wei, my father has granted me the title Wenchang. According to legend, I was the most intelligent in the royal family. Although the stuff of legends are usually untrue, I was still quite confident of my intelligence compared to the rest of the people in the Wei Palace. However, I immediately pale in comparison to Xiao Lan. Could it be that Wei’s downfall cannot be blamed on causes beyond our control, but because of the royal family’s own foolishness?

“Your expression – what are you thinking about?” Xiao Lan asked.

“I was just thinking that many legends are actually not that legendary, but only became such due to exaggeration when retold by others. But there are no legends right now – they only happen in the past and the future. They are a meaningless fantasy born from an error. Except that the greater the error, the greater the story becomes. This is truly confusing!”

Xiao Lan indicated that he had not understood what I said.

“What I’m saying is that...”

He interrupted me, “Eat first. We can talk later.”

So we started to eat the dumplings.

By the time we were done eating, I had already forgotten what I was thinking about.

Translator’s Notes:

[1] In Chinese culture, eating/drinking vinegar is the colloquial expression used to at least half of stuff denote jealousy. There are lots of jokes about someone eating/drinking vinegar when they're jealous. A common one is, "Ah... Why do I smell something vinegary in the air? Could it be someone's jealous?" or "Aiya, we better go buy some vinegar – it looks like someone has drank all the vinegar in the house!"

[2] 抱拳 (pinyin. bao quan) (lit. wrapped/held fist), which is a form of greeting among men, made with one clenched fist in the other hand moving about from the chest. Of course, to literally translate it might imply violence that wasn't in the scene.

[3] 梨园 (pinyin. li yuan)(lit. the Pear Garden), which could refer to the theatre. It is also the original name of a college of dramatics founded by imperial decree in the Tang Dynasty.

Commentary:

Hahaha... I did not cheat – but this chapter is truly a short chapter. Chapter 5 will be wrapping up Song Ning's story. Unfortunately for you all (because, really lucky me), I will be on vacation the whole of next week, so it is very unlikely that there will be any updates until the week after. Well, on the bright side, I'm not leaving you teetering on the edge of a cliffhanger.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 5.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 5.1

[May 11, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [21 Comments](#)



Hola-I'm back. In case anyone's curious about my trip – Taiwan was very fun, but sadly, I was overcome by a bad flu and throat infection as soon as I got home. Must be all the fried food, late nights, dehydration and exhaustion. So I spent my week feeling a bit Ah'Fu-ish, in that I was in a state where I was between feeling Not Human and Somewhat Human most of the time.

So forgive me for the relatively short chapter post. I decided to just post what I managed to translate first since this chapter has one of my personal favourite scenes in it. Hee Hee Hee...

Chapter 5.1

The winter rain poured so heavily it created a misty veil that connected the heavens and the earth together. Through this veil, one could see snow-capped mountains in the distance. Although Xiao Lan and I had misgivings as to the occurrence of thunderstorms during mid-winter, there was nothing we could do about it but to buy a pair of umbrellas.

An hour ago, we had learned the whereabouts of Liu Qiqi from an auntie selling pancakes at a street stall; Liu Qiqi should be at the snow mountains harvesting snow-lotus seeds for medicinal purposes. According to the auntie, Liu Qiqi was Dr Liu's only granddaughter. She was pretty, kind, gentle, and had superb medical skills. Her only shortcoming was that she was a mute.

Auntie kindly pointed out the only trail leading into the mountains used by the local people. As recompense for her help, I had Xiao Lan buy 10 of her pancakes as provisions for our journey. However, the mountain trail was really too convenient; we did not even have a chance to use our provisions. So I started eating the pancakes while hiking up behind Xiao Lan, in hope that I could lessen the burden on our shoulders.

The rain lightened up midway through our journey. "Why don't you ask me what I plan to do once we find Liu Qiqi?" I asked Xiao Lan.

He did not even turn his head, "Isn't it to kidnap her and only release her once the Shen couple has left this place?"

I nodded my head and said, "That was my original intention. But this thing called Fate is too indomitable; I cannot help but worry. What if one day, Liu Qiqi still meets Shen An in the future and cause a heap of trouble that is more troublesome than what has already happened? Wouldn't I have wasted my time doing this deal?"

"So?"

I caught up to him in two steps and walked alongside him, "Think about it. If Liu Qiqi falls deeply in love with another man before meeting Shen An, even if they should meet in the future she wouldn't develop feelings for him. If this is

the case, then regardless of what is the ending for Shen An and Song Ning, Song Ning's half of Song Ning's wish would have been fulfilled, and it should count that I have completed at least half of my deal."

He stopped walking and turned around while raising the paper umbrella slightly, as if smiling, asked, "And so?"

In that moment, it was as if the cold fragrance of plum blossoms arose in the rain seeped into my cloak and my sleeves, enveloping me in it. It wove an illusion from an indelible memory of mine.

It was also raining that day, with drops of rain falling on me like a cascade of beads. As my life ebbed away, I saw a man carrying an umbrella with 64 ribs come up to me. In that heavy downpour in the State of Wei, he had also raised his umbrella slightly. My blood had blurred my vision, making me unable to see his face clearly. I often thought that that was just an illusion created at the moment of death; until today, I could not be sure if what I thought I saw had actually happened.

"Xiao Lan, I had already come up with a perfect plan that will make Liu Qiqi fall deeply in love with you. Are you willing to help me? Of course, if you are unwilling, we can just forget about it," I told him seriously.

"Oh, then let's forget about..." he said.

"I've heard that you are quite skilled at martial arts? Then I'm sure you won't need me to lead you out of this Huaxu Realm? Aih... Actually, it's alright even if you can't find your way out – look, don't you think that this place is actually quite good. Oh, by the way, what were you about to say just now?"

He stared at me for a long while. I calmly took out another bun and started to munch on it.

He finally said quietly, "I wanted to say, in such a small matter – if Miss Jun has already thought of a perfect plan – then let's act according to Miss Jun's suggestion."

"Very well," I nodded.

"It's only that..." he continued

“What is it?” I asked curiously.

“I don’t mind at all. After all, the Liu Qiqi here is but an illusion to me. It’s only that even if Liu Qiqi falls in love with me, there is no guarantee that she will not turn her affections towards Shen An if she meets him,” he laughed.

I handed him a mirror and said, “Come, have more confidence in your appearance.”

“.....”

The rain stopped as soon as we entered the mountains. We hid ourselves near a path that Liu Qiqi is bound to use. Shortly after that, a staggering figure did indeed appear in the distance. I hurriedly reminded him, “Act according to the plan.”

I threw a snowball in the direction of the figure. I froze when I finally saw the person’s face clearly. The woman’s hair was disheveled and she was wearing thin clothes. She carried a large man wrapped in a velvet robe on her back, forcing her body to be bent at the waist; it was as if she was relying entirely on the spear in her hand to prevent her from falling face first into the snowy ground.

I recognised her even though her beauty was obscured by the dirt streaking her face, this is Song Ning from seven years ago. Even though she is not the person I was looking for right now, it is still fate that allowed us to meet. I hid my surprise and pretended to be a stranger passing by. She held on to the spear in her hand tightly; from a glance, I could see her whitened knuckles.

Her hoarse voice sounded suddenly, “Miss, please halt. Does Miss stay in this mountain? Can you please tell me how to get out of this mountain, where can I find a clinic? My husband is gravely ill, if we are further delayed in this mountains, I am afraid that...”

I looked around before interrupting her, “There is a man wearing a white fur cloak just ahead. Go and ask him – I am not familiar with this area.” As soon as I finished, I rushed away and disappeared into the distance. It is not that I did not want to help her, but because I really had forgotten how we had come here. I also had a reason for running away so quickly; because the person that I was

looking had finally appeared – Liu Qiqi.

Just as Song Ning started to described her husband's condition, Liu Qiqi had walked out of a trail and turned left onto another trail. From the back, I could see that she was dressed in thick winter clothing and carrying a basket. As I chased after her, I thought to myself that Song Ning was actually closer to the exit than Liu Qiqi. Why Liu Qiqi had arrived back at the clinic before Song Ning and Shen An 7 years ago was most likely because Song Ning, in a moment of distraction, had gotten lost as she neared the exit out of the mountains.

Seeing that Liu Qiqi was only about 10 metres away from me, I thought that it was about time for me to start the show. I took out a small dagger from my waistband and shouted as I pounced towards Liu Qiqi's frail figure, "I planted those herbs. How dare you steal from me..."

The plan was for Xiao Lan to heroically rescue the Beauty; as I am about to pounce on Liu Qiqi, Xiao Lan was to suddenly appear and push me away with one strike. He should then help the fallen Liu Qiqi off the ground and ask her with a gentle smile, "Has Miss been frightened?" This would surely make Liu Qiqi fall for him, since it was pretty much under the same circumstances that I had fallen for Mu Yan.

Alas – for all of our planning – we had failed to predict that this trail was by a cliff. The icy ground was slippery and I had dropped a pancake as I rushed forward. Just as I made to pounce on her, I accidentally stepped on the said pancake and slid on it for at least a couple of metres. With a neat "dong", I had pushed Liu Qiqi off the mountain...

I laid on my stomach at the cliffside and stared down in disappointment. I did not know when Xiao Lan appeared. He squatted next to me and looked downwards as well. But it was a sea of white below the cliff and since Liu Qiqi wore a flowing white dress today, she had literally blended into the snowscape.

I was so anxious I almost cried, "Why didn't you appear earlier? You see... I had killed Liu Qiqi off just like that. This business deal didn't need for her to die. Pity her that she didn't even manage to scream as she fell down."

Xiao Lan pulled me to my feet and said lightly, "Isn't this very good? Now, everything has come to an end and we can all return home and sleep."

I anxiously said, “No! I didn’t hear the ‘thud’ of her body fall onto the ground. What if Liu Qiqi has been caught on some trees and managed to survive the fall? Don’t stop me – I must continue to look for her.” With that, I threw myself towards the ground.

I did not think that Xiao Lan would let go. I had thought that he would use his full strength to stop me. His sudden loosening of his grasp on me did not give me any time to react. To be fair, to say that would cause a misunderstanding. The truth is I was not prepared but he was already one step ahead of me. The result of my unpreparedness was that I used too much force in struggling free and was unable to regain my balance in time. So as soon as he let me go, I followed Liu Qiqi’s path and fell off the cliff as well. When I heard him call out “Ah’Fu” behind me, I had already plummeted down the cliffside like a swallow.

Commentary:

Rah – This is one of my favourite parts of the Song Ning sub-story. Although the Liu Qiqi in the Dreamscape did not deserve to die, it was still immensely satisfying to imagine her flying off the cliff. I especially liked the part where Ah’Fu commented that she did not even managed to squeak a single sound before/as she fell.

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 5.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 5.2

[May 17, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [16 Comments](#)



Posting a little earlier than usual. This chapter shows what could have been between Shen An. If you remember, Jun Fu explained once that the Hua Xu Realm is born from the human heart, but everyone within it is a shadow of their real selves, and would behave exactly how their real selves would.

Chapter 5.2

I remembered Master lecturing Jun Wei and I about how if you release an iron ball weighing 10 kilograms and an iron ball weighing 1 kilogram from the same height at the same time, they would still both hit the ground at the same time. I watched as Xiao Lan jump after me and a feeling of despondency washed over me. According to the principle of the iron balls, how would it be possible for him to reach me in time? Why did he not back up a distance and make a short dash off the cliff in order to gain some acceleration?

Actually, I would not die as long as the Pearl within my body remains intact. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I would not be able to be dead-er from the experience. That was why I did not feel any fear.

But Xiao Lan is but a mere mortal. He must be crazy to jump so fearlessly off the cliff; wasn't it akin to committing suicide? With this thought, the place where the Pearl resides thumped twice and I suddenly felt a little afraid. I opened my mouth to scream, but the sound seemed to be stuck in my throat. I could only see a sea of white before me, that filled both my eyes and my heart.

It was at this time when something catch my body. A soft sword scratched and pierced the icy cliff wall in a shrill screech. Xiao Lan gripped on to the handle of the sword with his right hand and used his left arm to hold me securely against him. My forehead pressed against his cheek.

We dangled in this manner for a long while. He finally said slowly, "Miss Jun is truly courageous. Your life is on the line and yet you can remain so calm. Other girls would surely be trembling in fear right now."

"I am also trembling. It's just that I am quietly trembling inside," I said.

In order to increase the believability of my words, I wrapped my arms around his neck. This is actually quite a difficult maneuver. I hear the sword being pulled out from the ice. Xiao Lan used the icy cliff face as leverage to leap upwards, and repeated the move three times. I hear the wind whistling in my ears. Before I could react, our feet had touched solid ground again.

My head was dizzy from the journey upwards so I squatted down and rubbed

my head. He, on the other, appeared entirely unaffected. He reached out and pulled me away from the edge of the cliff. I did not know what he was thinking. He finally said, "You know that this is only an illusion. Do you really intend to pay with your life just because you accidentally killed within this illusion? I really do not know to call you honest or stupid."

I thought that this must be the world's biggest misunderstanding, but I could not tell him about the Pearl. In that case, it was better to let this beautiful misunderstanding continue.

I continued to rub my head.

He knelt next to me, "What's wrong?"

I was too embarrassed to tell him that the shaking and tumbling had made me dizzy, so I said, "Nothing. It's just that I'm feeling a little hungry after the scare."

"Don't we have some pancakes. Why don't you have one?"

I suddenly remembered something important and hurriedly held on to him, "How did you break the principle of the iron balls to catch up to me?"

He raised his head, "What is that?"

"It's a long story, but essentially...." I started.

He interrupted me, "Eat your pancake first. We can talk after you've finished."

And so we started eating pancakes.

But when we finished, I had already forgotten what I wanted to say.

We stayed a further two days in the mountains. According to Xiao Lan, it is a rare opportunity to be able to visit the border between Jiang and Li. Since we were already here, we must take the chance to familiarise ourselves with the surrounding terrain, in order to make this trip worthwhile.

This was the way a military strategist would think. If it was Jun Wei here, he would have insisted that we find an inn to stay for two days so that he can concentrate on his writing. This was have been the novelist's way of thinking.

I followed Xiao Lan around exploring the terrain. The complicated and confusing surroundings looked unfamiliar to me no matter how many times we

walked the same path. However, Xiao Lan was able to map the area up without any hesitation. I looked at him and felt like there was nothing in this world that he did not know how to do. But I rejected an idea within a few minutes because I suddenly remembered that he did not know to give birth.

Two days later, good weather once again gave way to the rain. Timing our arrival to the time Shen An would be waking up, Xiao Lan and I slowly made our way to the clinic with opened umbrellas hovering above our heads. The purpose of this trip was to see how Shen An would react when he saw Song Ning upon waking up.

My heart was actually very unsettled. I did not know whether my gamble would pay off. Their destiny was separated by their countries' conflict and familial hatred. I did not know whether Shen An would be like me, and be able to separate his personal life from his public duty to his country.

It was the dead of the night. I carefully opened the window and lifted the curtain to look inside. Xiao Lan quickly pulled me away and into a quiet corner, "Is this what you call a sneak peek?"

I brushed off his hand, "How are we sneakily peeping. Don't make me sound so disgusting. We are just taking a quick peep in secret."

Xiao Lan crossed his arms and looked at me.

I touched my nose, "Do you want to come and take a sneak peek with me? Since I am already peeping, why don't we peep together?"

Xiao Lan rubbed his temples tiredly, "You go and peep alone. But be careful. Those two in the room are both skilled in martial arts. There'll be trouble if they found you there."

And so, I happily ran off to go peeping.

Through the slit in the window, I saw the scene from 7 years ago replayed. The only difference was that since I had accidentally pushed the original female lead, Liu Qiqi, off the mountain cliff, the woman sitting by the bedside is now Song Ning. She was studying Shen An's sleeping face with great concentration. Her

face was so close to her lips nearly touched his nose.

I thought, If it were me, I would have just kissed him there and then. Just as that thought past through my head, Song Ning proved herself to be from a military line – she really kissed him. Because the kiss was to his cheek and because I had excellent eyesight, I saw that her eyes were closed, her long eyelashes were fluttering, her porcelain skin was flushed – and that Shen An chose to open his eyes at that instant.

The rain started to patter on the rooftop, on the pavement outside. He raised his arm and touched her back, bringing her closer to him. She opened her eyes in shock and tried to distance herself from him but he did not let her go. He looked at her carefully, his gaze travelled from her hair that was loosely tied back, to her beautiful eyes. After what seemed like an eternity, an inscrutable smile came onto his pale but handsome face, “I recognise you, Song Ning.”

Panic flashed in her eyes but she regained her composure quickly. She raised her head but did not speak; she only wanted to move away from him, perhaps because of a woman’s modesty. I understood what she was feeling – she really hoped that Shen An would know that she was Song Ning, but at the same time she is so afraid of Shen An knowing that she was Song Ning. Because Song Ning wasn’t just Song Ning, she was also the younger sister of Song Yan, the Great General of Li.

Shen An only hugged her closely to him, “Song Ning, why did you save me?” One could not tell what he was feeling from his voice, and his face did not have the same warmth and gentleness he displayed when he met Liu Qiqi the first time 7 years ago.

Cold sweat perspired in my palms. I had lost my gamble. It was fated that in this life, Shen An is unable to fall in love with Song Ning, and this is so even within this dreamscape.

Song Ning struggled to extricate herself from his grasp, “Don’t you dare think that I really wanted to save you. It is just that you had defeated me before. I am not willing to accept that result. So before I defeat you, you cannot die. I definitely will not let you die. That is my only reason for doing so.”

I did not have the heart to continue watching them. Based on my analysis of

Shen An's personality, I could already predict the likely outcome. Just as I was about to leave and find Xiao Lan for discussion, the lamps in the room suddenly flickered. When the candle flames in the lamps steadied again, the two figures on the bed had already switched positions into one where Shen An was on top of Song Ning.

I used one hand to keep my jaw from hitting the floor.

I saw Shen An firmly kept Song Ning on the bed. He did not look like someone who was still recovering from serious injuries. He asked perplexedly, "Then what were you doing just now, Song Ning. Were you using your mouth to help me hit mosquitoes?"

She blushed, and was at once speechless.

He pushed away her loose hair from her face and stroked the hair at her forehead. He said lightly, "I kept wondering how the girl who saved me would look like. So this is how she looks like me. Why didn't you say anything? Why didn't you tell me that you were Song Ning from Sang Yang Pass?"

Tears spilled from Song Ning's eyes. She hugged him and cried, "Why would I tell you? You surely wouldn't have allowed me to save you. You must hate me, so you wouldn't even have let me touch you. You're awake. It's good that you're awake now. I'm going to return to Li. You said that you would marry me – let's just treat that as a joke. After all, I never took it seriously."

He looked at her helplessly, and gently patted her back, "Do you think it was very easy to have saved me? Do you think it is easy for me to fall in love?"

She cried even harder, "You're lying. You just saw my face. You just found out that it was me."

He planted kisses on her eyelids. "You're right. I just saw your face, just found out that it was you. I fell in love with the girl who saved me, but I did not know how she looked like."

The Song Ning from seven years later, lived every day suppressing her feelings. I thought that such was her personality, but it was only today that I understood that it was only because the only man she wanted to act coquettishly with[1], had ignored her for the entire seven years. She also can behave like this at times,

could experience tumultuous emotions. And the man she loved saw this side of her, her innocence, the real Song Ning.



I moved away from the window. Xiao Lan stood under an umbrella in the yard, admiring patches of light coloured cyclamens. This type of flowers are not suited to the climate, so it was really rare to seem them in these parts. And for them to be able to bloom, that was truly an auspicious omen from the heavens.

I walked passed him and the fence. He walked over and held the umbrella over my head, “So what happened between the two of them?”

I gave him a small smile, “I won.”

The rain fell on the umbrella, pitter-patter. He cast a glance at me, “But you do not look too happy.”

“It’s not that I’m not happy,” I said. “It is only after seeing everything that happened tonight in this dreamscape, did I realise that the misunderstanding from seven years ago did not happen, Song Ning and Shen An would have been quite happy together and would not end up where they are at now. So I am just feeling a little emotional about it. This feeling, it’s like... you go to a brothel to find a courtesan, but then she is unwilling to go with you. You always thought it was because you were not good looking enough, and that was why the courtesan did not like you. And some years later, you find out that it was not because she didn’t like you; she actually thought that you were quite handsome and was very willing to spend the night with you. Unfortunately, she had her period that day, so she could not take things one step further.”

He looked at me, “Miss Jun...”

I interrupted him, “Are you about to tell me that I am saying foolish things?[2]. I am actually quite a conservative person. The reason why I am quite unreserved

with my words is because I had lived too carefully for the past seven years. Now that I am alone in this world, naturally I would say whatever I am thinking freely. Why would I suppress my opinions and make myself unhappy?”

He kept quiet for a while before saying, “Miss Jun is behaving a little out of the ordinary tonight.”

I looked into the distance, at the darkened sky, and asked him “Xiao Lan. What do you think is fake and what do you think is real? I feel that it is all in the mind. If you do not think that it is an illusion, then it is not an illusion. In this world that I created for them, they are real. The tears they shed are real, their smiles are real, their love is real, their loyalty and righteousness is real, their unpredictability is real, their heart’s inconstancy is also real. Although his Hua Xu Realm that is born from the human heart seeks beauty and perfection, it is actually ugly and brutal. Without a strong heart, be it in reality or a fantasy, one can never attain eternal happiness. And if you have a strong heart, one would be able to lead a good life in reality; in that case, why would someone come into this dreamscape?”

My speech was reasoned out and logical. But towards the end, now that I look back, even I did not know what I was saying.

Xiao Lan thought for a while without a word. He finally looked up at me and asked, “What do you plan to do?”

I had already made up my mind, “I am waiting for a great battle. A battle where the snow will dance in the wind and the bones of war cover the ground.”

He looked at me thoughtfully. I calmly return his stare and suddenly remember something that I needed to tell him, “Ah yes. I forgot to tell you earlier, but look, my clothing here – I cannot reach – can you see it? It’s just on my shoulder... there’s a tear. You’re so capable, surely you’re good at sewing. Can you help me mend it?”

He examined my clothing for a while before finally saying, “This capable me does not know how to sew, so I cannot mend it for you.”

“.....”

I was not joking when I told Xiao Lan that I was waiting for a big battle. I

already know what I need to do. This Hua Xu Realm was actually a void, and each musical note in the Hua Xu Melody represents a period of time within this void. By having the Pearl perform the Hua Xu Melody within this void, we should be able to travel to another point in time within the Melody. However, we can only travel to the future, and once we do so, we will not be able to return to the past.

I had already thought about this for a long while. I will finish this last thing that I have to do, something that my conscience required. But I did not know how far forward in the future we should move to – one year or three years?

I asked Xiao Lan, “Based on your experience, how long do you think we need to give a pair of lovers, for them to become inseparable and create many happy memories?”

The rain has already stopped, so he closed the umbrella and put it away. He calmly replied, “Perhaps half a year.”



On the next day, we managed to borrow a qin from the music hall in town. The music resounded from the qin. As the last note left my fingers, the clouds drifted away in the wind, autumn leaves covered once withered branches and flowers floated in the air towards the ground. It was already half a year later, in the autumn of the 18th year of the reign of the Duke Lizhuang, the time during which the battle between the States of Jiang and Xia will take place.

The battle had already ended, and a barren piece of land stretching a thousand miles was the result. The only thing in sight was Jiang’s army camp that was packing up to return to the capital. This was seven years ago, and nine months

after Shen An and Song Ning were married. This is the battle where Xia wanted to invade Jiang; Song Ning had gifted Shen An with her *huxing jing*.

I went into a reedy area alone and took out the skin mask from my sleeve. I removed my mask from my face, stopped by a small pool and carefully applied the skin mask to my face. Master Jun makes the best skin masks in the world, and my skills are learnt from him. But as I looked at Song Ning’s face reflected in the pool, I suddenly felt that perhaps my ability in this area has surpassed that of my master.

Xiao Lan voice floated slowly over to me, “Miss Jun, are you still alive?”

I pushed away some of the reeds and called out, “I’m here.”

He looked at me from head to toe, “You’ve disguised yourself this way, what are you planning to do?”

“To find Shen An,” I replied. “There is something that I must do. Wait for me here. When I’m done, I will come back to look for you.”

He studied me for a while before saying, “Be careful in all that you do.”

Translator’s Notes:

[1] 撒嬌 (pinyin sajiāo), according to the dictionary, means to act like a spoiled child, to throw a tantrum or to act coquettishly. The closest equivalent would be ‘aegyo’ in Korean.

[2] 童言无忌 (pinyin tóng yán wú jì), a phrase used to express that one is/should not be offended by what a child says (which may be foolish/rude). However, the usual expression does not actually work in this context.

Commentary:

Mostly cute and loving scenes. I was bawling to decembi as I translated the scene between Shen An and Song Ning, that I had forgotten how beautiful the scenes in this book can be. I was actually sniffing away. I have not read HXY for a very long time, so re-reading it as I translate it is like an old friend. I remember

vague pieces of it, but now I am rediscovering how funny and beautiful this book is.

The next post will be the finale of the sub-story. I decided to cut here today because it is still comparatively light and fluffy. The tears will come later. *sniffles*

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 5.3

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 5.3

[May 18, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [59 Comments](#)



Ahhhhh Surprise Post! THIS is the finale to Song Ning's story. The original schedule would have had me finishing this this week anyway, and I really didn't want to hang on to this anymore. This is one of the most heart rending stories, and I really wanted to finish it quickly and move on to the next part.

Here's a picture for you all, of what could have been happier times for Song Ning and Shen An.

It was a warm autumn day. I used a scarf to cover my face because I could not allow anyone to see Song Ning appearing here. A guard at the entrance of the camp had gone off with my letter to look for Shen An. I had forged Song Ning's handwriting, and invited Shen An to meet me alone at the the hill rise where hollyhocks bloomed.

He surely would come.

The hill was covered with hollyhock flowers swaying in the wind. I had never

been to this place but have heard a lot of stories about it. The most famous story of them all was about how since the previous dynasty, this has been the burial ground of heroes; it was their blood's righteousness that gave life to the spread of hollyhocks. If you uprooted one, you would still be able to smell the scent of their bones on its roots. I thought that I had found an appropriate place for Shen An.

The rustling of footsteps against dry leaves came from behind. I turned and smiled at him. This is the illusion that Song Ning loved so dearly her entire life, the illusion that she could not let go even if it meant death.

Large black boots trampled on the hollyhocks. He hugged me tightly and his low voice sounded in my ear, sighing, "Ah Ning. I've missed you."

The scent of blood that wafted to my nostrils grew stronger. I pulled out the dagger that had pierced into his heart from his back and gently whispered into his ear, "I've missed you too."

It was the 14th day of the ninth month, in the 18th year of the reign of the Duke Lizhuang. The Jiang army had fought a victorious war, but no trumpets and fanfare greeted their return to the capital because their general had been assassinated. In the wake of the fall of their war hero, the entire country fell into mourning.

The General's Mansion was decked in the white banners of mourning. Xiao Lan and I snuck in amidst the throng of mourners coming to pay their last respects and saw a spirit tablet and incense placed on a high altar, flanked by a pair of white glazed vases holding bouquets of flowers I could not name.

The flames of the burning white candles surrounding the large uncovered ebony coffin that occupied the main hall cast a lonely shadow. Song Ning clung to the side of the coffin, and quietly stared at the person lying within the coffin. Someone would come up to her from time to time to offer their condolences and consolation, but received no reaction from her.

"This is the good dream that you've weaved for her?" Xiao Lan asked me.

I could not understand him. "Do you think that this is a good dream. This is

obviously a nightmare.”

I have purposefully destroyed the loveliness in order to allow Song Ning to see reality. In this world, there is a type of loveliness that could take someone’s life. Most people will first think of women, but why would a woman make life difficult for another woman? What I was referring to was not women, but this Hua Xu Realm.

I wanted to explain this to Xiao Lan, but he had already changed the subject, “When you accidentally killed Liu Qiqi, you were so distressed. I never thought that you would have the courage to kill someone with your own hands.”

“Because I have developed. You must look at the problem from a developed point of view,” I replied.

Night fell and all the guests had departed. Husband and wife were left alone in the main hall, only that one has departed while the other was still alive. Song Ning’s pale face rested against the coffin, her soft voice carried by the night wind into the corridors before dispersing in the candlelight, “We’re finally alone together again.”

Her long fingers caressed the surface of the coffin. Just as if they were having a pillow talk, she said, “I had wanted to personally tell you the good news when you return. They wanted to write to you about it but I had stopped them, because I had wanted to see your happiness with my own eyes. You do not know... how long I had waited for this day. I wanted to see you, I had missed you so much.”

The birds outside the hall cawed suddenly and the candles flickered. She covered her eyes with her hand, and her calm voice suddenly choked out, “Shen An, we are going to have a child.” She said it so softly and gently before his spirit tablet. She spoke the words to him, but alas – he could no longer hear them.

I entered the hall just as she finished speaking. The large white banner flapped in the night wind. She looked up suddenly, “Shen An?”

I stepped out from behind the white banner and walked towards the candlelight so that she can see me.

Her teary eyes recognised my red dress and her raised spirits dimmed. Her

expression became empty once more.

A draft blew into the hall, rustling my skirts. I looked at her, "I am not Shen An, Song Ning. I've come to lead you out of this illusion."

A confused expression appeared on her face, "Illusion?" Her confusion only lasted a second before reason returned, "I remember you. I've seen you in the snow mountains at Canglu Ye. You are..."

I walked closer to her and smiled, "The first time we met was not in the mountains at Canglu Ye, Song Ning. All of this is just an illusion I created for you."

I did not notice when Xiao Lan appeared by my side, calmly taking in the surroundings of the hall.

I continued walking towards her, "In this illusion, your husband has died and has this grand funeral. But in reality, he is still alive and well. He has mistreated you, married another woman and had children with her. You used your life to enter into this bargain with me, for me to create this dream where the two of you can spend your lives and grow old together. In this illusion that I've created for you, he truly did fall in love with you. But all this is just the manifestation of the demons within your heart... they're not real."

As I spoke these words, I saw her face slowly turn from white to ashen gray. Fear crept into her eyes. This is not the Song Ning from seven years later that I was familiar with. She took a step back and knocked into the white glazed vase behind her. It fell with a crash and a sliver of porcelain flew up, slicing her long fingers.

"Song Ning, you don't believe me?" I asked.

Time seemed to still and the air grew heavy. I've told her everything. Shen An's death has broken her heart and caused her so much grief; surely she would now be unwilling to stay in this hopeless illusion. There is nothing more terrible than the death of your lover. After experiencing such pain, the pain from the fact that Shen An did not love her in reality surely cannot compare. Song Ning's illness is that of the heart. As long as she is able to let go and return to reality, she would surely be able to recover quickly.

She scrambled to gather the flowers that have spilled across the floor. I was about to get down to help her but Xiao Lan stopped me. Halfway through, she suddenly stopped moving and looked at the pale autumn flowers in her hand. After a while, she finally said, “Do you know, all this time, I kept having this dream, this terrifying dream. And when I woke up, I would be so afraid until I could not stop shivering. All along, that dream... all of it...” She looked up at me in a panic, “All that, was real.”

Two large tears rolled off the corner of her eyes. She asked me, “The things that you have not told me about the reality, is there also... my son? I had a son, his name was Shen Luo. He passed away... from a cold?”

I did not reply her. She looked steadily at me for long time, before finally giving me a small smile amidst the tears, “I want to stay here.”

My heart dropped.

She lowered her head to look at her fingers, her tears falling on the palm of her hand. She looked away towards Shen An’s spirit tablet. “You say that all this is just an illusion you created for me, that all this is false. And what I saw in my dream is actually real. But such a reality is too cruel. Between the reality I dreamt and this illusion I’m in now – which is more painful?

That reality, even without experiencing it firsthand, I was already shivering and unable to withstand it when I was just from dreaming about it. If it is as you say it is, that there was really that seven years, how could I have survived that? When I think about it, I feel that Shen An’s death is not so difficult to stomach after all. At least we had wonderful memories together and I will have his child. I think I can survive this. Yes. I will be able to survive this. He would also want me to carry on. But if you want me to return with you to what you call reality – to that unbearable situation. The Shen An in the world doesn’t even want me to live, why would I want to continue living?”

I had no response to her speech. The only sounds were that of the whistling of the wind and tree branches rustling against each other.

I wanted to save her, but ultimately failed to do so.

She leaned on the coffin to help her stand and planted the flowers in her hand within the other white glazed vase. Because her back was to me, I could not see

her expression. I could only hear her say softly, “From what Miss has said earlier, I had used my life in exchange for Miss creating this illusion. Have I died already in reality? If that is the case, please cremate my body and take my ashes... back to the State of Li and give them to my brother.”

I opened my mouth and only uttered a single word, “Alright.”

Five days later, Xiao Lan and I left Song Ning’s Hua Xu Realm. During the time in between, we returned to the mountains at Canglu Ye because due to the tight timeline earlier, Xiao Lan had been not finished two of his maps. Coincidentally, we learned that Liu Qiqi had not died after all. She was rescued by a hunter and to repay his kindness, she had married him.

Even Liu Qiqi got a decent husband.

I told Xiao Lan, “I should not have killed Shen An. I did not think that it would end like this, that Song Ning would refuse to leave this dream. I wanted to save her, that was why I killed Shen An – but I ultimately caused her to suffer.”

Xiao Lan looked at me for a good while before he gently said, “This is truly a good dream. Lady Shen wish was for him to spend his life loving her, and never betray her. General Shen died at a time when he loved her most. She will have his heart that never betrayed her love, and live on. After she passes this period of grief, she will truly have a lifetime of happiness that is free from worry. If you did not kill General Shen, then that may lead to endless troubles. Could you guarantee that within this illusion, he would never betray her love his entire life?”

I expressed my surprised, “You can actually reason all of this out with me. Isn’t it that you men hate to talk about this kind of lovey-dovey matters?”

He cast a glance at me, “Is there such thing? If there is truly such a thing, then the entire country’s brothels will have to cease business.”

I reflected on that and felt that he had really struck the nail on his head.

I held Xiao Lan’s hand and prepared to leave Hua Xu Realm. He extracted his hand out of my grasp and held my hand instead and gently said, “An illusion is

but an illusion. You cannot take these illusions too seriously.”

He actually said such a thing. A pair of geese flew high in the sky.

Although half a year had past within the Hua Xu Realm, it has only been one day in the mortal world. Once we escaped the dreamscape, a rush of warmth suddenly travelled through my body into the place where the Pearl resides; even my blood is heated up from the experience. That was the Pearl absorbing Song Ning’s life essence. In the backdrop of this lonely sunset, she passed away quietly without anyone knowing.

The servants still stood by the water pavillion. Jun Wei and Xiao Huang was napping lazily nearby the pavillion. Everything was so quiet and peaceful, it was as if nothing had happened.

Zhi Su saw Xiao Lan and cried out in happy surprise, “Gongzi!” That woke Jun Wei and Xiao Huang up. Both man and tiger bounded up to me to make sure that I was not injured.

It was at this moment when a spark suddenly appeared within the pavillion which quickly turned into a fiery blaze. Jun Wei stilled in shock, “Isn’t Song Ning still inside?” With that, he made to enter the pavillion to save her but I pulled him back.

“Looks like she had already made her final decision in advance,” Xiao Lan said quietly.

I quickly told Jun Wei what had happened in brief. I watched the pavillion burn and suddenly remembered that she had asked me to cremate her body. This is exactly what Song Ning would do. Without my lifting a finger, she had already made all the preparations before she even entered the dream.

Screams of shock and horror came from the other side of the pond. A few loyal servants tried to rush into the fire but was forced back by the flames. Song Ning has always been careful and the fire had probably spread to every inch of the pavillion. She wanted to burn her body to ashes, for the ashes to be placed in a porcelain jar and returned to her homeland she had bid a final farewell to seven years ago.

The fire burned brighter and stronger in the wind and lit the sky a fiery red. A burning beam fell from the room into the pond; acrid smoke poured out in place of the extinguished flames. The pillars of the pavillion suddenly collapsed and one could see the rattan bed burning with Song Ning in it. She looked as if in a peaceful sleep.

In similar folktales, the story would usually end with a bout of heavy rain. But in this story, the pavillion slowly burned itself out. Old Heaven did not even shed a tear. The cool evening breeze blew and the blood-red setting sun shed light on the ruins and the servants kneeling before it. None of them dared to move Song Ning's remains."

I told Xiao Lan, "Let's go and collect her remains."

He looked past me and said, "No need. The person who has come to collect her remains has arrived."

I turned my head curiously and saw the person Xiao Lan spoke of standing by the paved pathway. The person who has come to collect Song Ning's remains, the person who pushed her to her death in the first place.

Shen An, her husband.

He wore a white coloured brocade robe with black patterns decorating his collar and sleeves. It looked like a luxurious mourning gown that was so apt for the occasion. He slowly walked towards her, his white robe matching his pale face. His face remained cold but his voice was shaking, "She... Where is she?"

I pointed towards the ruins in front of the pond, "Have you heard that she had died, so you've come to collect her ashes? She told me that she wants them placed in a large porcelain jar, a porcelain jar decorated with white-blue glaze. Have you brought the jar?"

He opened his mouth but did not say anything. Instead, he turned to hurry towards the destruction, but tripped and almost fell. The servants kneeling in front of the pavillion quickly moved to clear a path for him. I carried my qin and followed him in time to see his body sway before kneeling heavily in the ruins. The setting sun behind him cast a long shadow.

I walked around him and saw Song Ning's remains. Just this morning, I saw her

with her hair done up in a high bun, her cheeks reddened with rouge – such beauty that is difficult to describe.

And by dusk, all that is left was a pile of bones.

Time stood still and I saw Shen An quietly kneeling in this piece of frozen time.

A charred crossbar broke off with a resounding ‘pa’. As if awoken by the sound, he fiercely and suddenly grabbed hold of her remains but his voice was gentle, “Didn’t you say that even if you die, you would first want to see me dead before you? Didn’t you say I had betrayed you, so you want to see how the Heavens would punish me? You hate me so. I haven’t died, so how can you die ahead of me?” He received no reply.

He hugged her tightly and carefully, as if she were a rare and precious treasure. His face pressed against her skull, and as if speaking to a lover, he said, “Ah Ning, say something...”

The smell of smoke and ash still filled the ruins. Even the ground was still hot.

I saw all of this, and suddenly felt the emptiness of life. I asked him rudely, “What do you want her to say? She can no longer say anything, even if you now wanted to hear her speak. But there is something she once told me, that on the night of her wedding, she had wanted to speak sweet words to you. She had just come to Jiang and was unfamiliar with the way of life here but her eyes and heart were filled with you. She did not have parents or sisters. No one taught her how to make her husband happy. But that night, she had truly wanted to tell you, “Husband, I am giving myself to you, please treasure me well.” Alas – you never gave her the opportunity to say it aloud.”

He suddenly raised his head.

I lowered myself and looked into his eyes, “You said that Song Ning hated you. She actually never hated you. There should be no woman in the world who would love you the way she did.”

He gazed at me intently. It was as if some invisible thing had hit him hard, his ashen face lost all colour. After a long while, he laughed and mumbled to himself, “She loved me? How could you say that? She never loved me. She had looked forward to me dying in battle.”

I found a place to sit and placed my qin on my lap. “Those were not words from her heart.” I looked up at him, “Shen An, I heard that you have not seen Song Ning for two years. Do you still remember her face? Why don’t I let you see the her from years ago one last time?”

I did not wait for his reply before starting to play the last part of her Hua Xu Melody. By playing the Melody, the dreamscape I created for Song Ning will appear in this mortal world. I never needed him to reply. Regardless of whether he wanted to or not, there are some things that he must come to know.

In the weak light of dusk, in the middle of the ruins, the scenes of the past that appeared in thin air was reflected in the pond’s waters.

It was the snowstorm in the desert, Song Ning lying flat on the horse’s back as they cross numerous sand dunes. Her hand was scratched by a piece of sharp gravel that was blown by the strong wind. She licked the wound with her tongue, hugging the horse’s neck and hurrying the tired war horse, “Run a little faster, I beg you to run a little faster. Shen An can’t hold on for much longer.”

It was the battlefield at Canglu Ye. She got off the horse and teetered over to the mountains of corpses. Her face was red from the strong wind blowing snow at her and her entire body was covered with dirt and dried blood. She reached into the mountain of corpses in front of her and turned over the bodies one by one. From dawn to dusk, she finally found the person she was looking for. She used her sleeve to wipe the dirt and blood from his face and hugged him, crying, “Shen An, I knew that I ought to come.” Before she finished speaking, she had covered her eyes and her tears fell like rain.

It was the mountain cave near the battlefield. He was covered with her winter velvet cloak to ward off the cold. Over and over again, she fed him water by forcing it past his lips, forcing him to swallow mouthful by mouthful. There was not a star in the sky and the cold winter wind whistled outside. She trembled and fell on his chest, “Why haven’t you woken up. Are you never going to wake up again? Shen An, I’m afraid.” She held him close and curled up next to him, “Shen An, I’m afraid.”

It was the three days they spent in the mountains. She was carrying him on her back when she tripped and fell down the slope. There was a wooden spike at the

bottom of the slope. She used her entire strength to protect him. The spike grazed her waist as they rolled past. She gasped in pain, "Lucky." She kissed his eyelids and supported herself to sit up. She held his face, "I will save you. Even if I die, I will save you."

The Melody suddenly stopped. I asked him, "Have you ever seen Song Ning like this?" Before I finished asking, he had already cut me off, "That is not real, I don't believe it." Shen An had one hand on his chest, his forehead had already broken into cold sweat. His body shook violently, but he kept his gaze on me and said, one word at a time, "All this that you've shown me, I don't believe it. It is not real, I do not believe it."

I found it funny so I really laughed aloud, "Shen An – whether it is real or otherwise, you know it best deep in your heart. Once upon a time, she had wanted to tell you all this but you never gave her the chance."

"Shen An, do you know how did Song Ning die? An illusion. She indulged herself in an illusion, and paid for it with her life. In this illusion, you finally fell in love with her and spent your lives together. It is actually not a problem for her to lose herself in this illusion. After all, one always desires what one cannot have – that is the way of humans. But you died in battle later. Even after you died, she was unwilling to leave the illusion. She would rather bear the pain of losing you forever than to live with the pain you give her in reality. She ordered for her body to be burned because she was unwilling to leave anything for you. She had originally loved you so much. Shen An, you do not know, but she had loved you for seven years."

When I finished, I saw his trembling fingers touch the jade bracelet on her wrist. He held on to it tightly until his fingertips turned white. His body jerked suddenly and he vomited a mouthful of blood. The red blood spilled on Song Ning's ribs. He cried out her name, as if his pain and grief can no longer be contained, "Ah Ning!" But she can no longer reply.

I carried my qin, "She has asked me to bring her ashes back to Li. From here onwards, the two of you are no longer related in anyway. General Shen, three days from now, I will come for Song Ning's ashes."

He ignored me, bent over and carried her remains. Step by step, he left the

pavillion, looking as if he could keel over any minute.

The servants on the ground still sobbed quietly.

I said coldly, "This is also good. Then would General Shen please realise her last wishes, that is to place her ashes in a porcelain jar decorated with blue-white glaze and pass it to her brother with your own two hands?"

The silence cut like a sharp knife. After a long while, he finally asked in a hoarse voice, "Did she have any last words for me before she died?"

I stared at his back, "None. Not a single word. She had nothing more to ask from you."

Not long after this incident, we heard that the States of Jiang and Li were once more at war. The Li army was led by the Great General Song Yan whilst the Jiang army had the Zhenyuan General, Shen An. At that time, we were sightseeing near the border of Jiang.

On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the rainy night, Xiao Lan brought news that Shen An has died at Canglu Ye. He had the perfect opportunity, and ought to have won this battle handily. Nobody knows how he ultimately lost the battle and died in the process.

We heard that just before he died, he ordered his subordinates to bury him in the wilds of Canglu Ye. When they were about to bury him, they discovered a small porcelain jar which contained some unknown white powder. When his concubine heard that he had died in battle, she committed suicide by hanging herself in the main hall that night itself.

Xiao Lan asked what I felt about it. I smiled at him and said, "If the Princess Jingwu, Song Ning were still alive, then I believe Shen An would not die. Because in this world, there would have been a person who would love him and save him without having a care for her life. Unfortunately, she has already died."

He kept quiet for a while, before he said, "So it is because Song Ning has died, that he is dead too?"

I asked, "Is it'?"

He remained silent.

I watched the rain outside the window and said quietly, “I don’t believe it.” I lowered my head and asked Xiao Huang, “Do you believe it?” Xiao Huang who was contentedly gnawing at a roast chicken, raised his head to cast one look at me when he heard me call him, before lowering his head to continue gnawing.

We sat opposite each other in silence for a little while. I finally asked him, “Why haven’t you been wearing blue clothing recently?”

“Why must I wear blue clothing?” he laughed.

“Because you’re called Xiao Lan,” I replied.

He raised a perfect eyebrow, “I was always curious why you never asked my name. Isn’t Xiao Lan something that you gave me.....” He stopped and looked as if he was thinking hard of the appropriate word to use, “Isn’t it a nickname you gave me?”

I thought back and realised that that was truly the case. I started to pour myself a cup of tea, “You must already have a name. Errr... Actually, I feel that a name is just something to refer to you by. I’ve gotten used to calling you Xiao Lan, so I forgot your real name. What is your real name?”

He clearly said, “My name is Mu Yan[1].”

My hand slipped and the teapot crashed onto the floor.

Translator’s Notes:

[1] What he actually said was, “慕言, 思慕的慕, 无以言对的言, 我的名字。” He basically explains that his Mu is from 思慕, meaning admiration, and his Yan is “words” from the phrase without words. But all this is quite difficult to explain if you don’t know Chinese – I’m not even doing a good job here. At the end of the day, the takeaway is that his name roughly means “words of admiration”.

Commentary:

I actually don’t have much to say because I’m still melancholic from translating

this in one sitting. Perhaps it would have been easier if I had broken it up.

The ending someone reminds us that there are no real villains in this story. I had been very harsh in Shen An in one of my previous posts. At that point, I was re-discovering the story – the intensity of it – but Shen An’s reaction in this chapter proves again that he was not a bad man. He had fallen in love with the girl who rescued him – whom he believed was LQQ. If Song Ning was there when he woke up, the the tragedy would not have happened, because he loved the girl who rescued him so unreservedly that he would love her even if she was his enemy’s sister.

And LQQ may not necessarily be evil. She just fell in love with a young handsome general. Perhaps she really never thought that Song Ning will come back. She was cowardly and selfish, but all these are human failings.

And Song Ning – perhaps in the comfort of the dreamscape, she has the happiest ending of them all. That as Xiao Lan / Mu Yan said, she can now live her life happily and without worries. She will have her son, and a family, and the undying love of the man she loves as well.

I don’t know. I’m still stewing in my reflections. Feel free to drop a comment with your thoughts. With the story at a close (and Xiao Lan’s real identity revealed), we should be able to discuss this first sub-story freely now!



Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 6.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 6.1

[June 1, 2014](#) by [hui3r](#) [30 Comments](#)



Arh – did anyone miss me while I was gone? I had to take a break to recuperate emotionally after translating the ending of Song Ning’s story in one breath. I felt so drained and emotionally paralysed afterwards. But discussing it with you all in the comments section of the last post helped me find some degree of closure.

It is as if T7 knows the number she did on our poor hearts and eyes, the first part of Chapter 6 is somewhat melancholic with some bits of funny thrown into the mix. Chapter 6.1 marks the beginning of Ying Ge’s Story – Thirteenth Moon, which I understand is a favourite for many of our readers here.

If you want to read the summary of Thirteenth Moon’s story, click [here](#).

Ying Ge’s Story – Thirteenth Moon

Chapter 6.1

The weather was clear the day we left the State of Jiang. We crossed the Cang Lan Mountains and entered the State of Zheng.

Mu Yan had planned to leave the next day. Something has happened back home and he has been urgently summoned back; he can only repay my kindness at a later date.

He actually did not owe me anything. If he remembered, he would have known that the accounting between us should be as such: he had saved me twice, and my saving his life once would have only offset him saving me the first time. In the end, I actually still owed him my life so I should be the one repaying him. But he obviously did not remember.

But that by itself was not a big deal. It was a known fact that a girl's appearance changes a lot when she attains adulthood. My face now was very different from that of three years ago, and I was also wearing my silver mask all the time. It was understandable that he could not recognise me, so there was nothing to be upset about.

I thought to myself, I had loved him for four years. I had never thought that I would be able to meet him again in this lifetime. Heaven was too cruel to allow us to meet again, but have us separated by life and death. But this is also good: for him, nothing had happened so there was nothing to come to an end; and for me, everything has already happened and has already come to an end. And now, the feelings of affection that was buried in my heart was nothing but a cherished memory; it does not belong in this time. Too much entanglements between us would not be a good thing.

In the end, I was still unable to forget. Every time I closed my eyes, the image of him playing the qin in the cave in Mount Yanhui would appear in my mind's eye, his silver mask, his long dark blue robe, his fingers manipulating the silken strings and the sounds of the qin echoing endlessly in the moonlight.

I thought, I should do something to make him leave me something – anything – as a token for remembrance.

The summer days were long so it was very late when dusk finally fell. I took a pot of wine and sought him out. I acted as if I had no ulterior motives and that my initiative stemmed entirely from the desire to find a drinking buddy to drink and admire the moon with. And it just so happened that he was selected, that it must be that we were especially fated that night.

He was sitting in the garden of the inn, drinking by himself whilst enjoying the breeze. I walked over and placed the pot of wine I brought on the stone table before him, before casting him a glance, “How meaningless it is to drink alone.”

He raised his head to look at me, “You’re here to drink with me then?”

I stared at the white porcelain wine cup in his hand for a moment before saying, “Mu Yan, could you play a tune for me before you leave?”

He looked at me in surprise but did not say a word. He placed his cup down, “What would you like to listen to?”

I thought for a moment before replying, “There’s nothing in particular that I wish to listen to.”

He gestured to Zhi Su who was stood in the distance before turning to look at me, “Then...”

I sat down on the stone stool and interrupted him, “Then why don’t you play for me every piece that you know?”

“.....”

Shortly thereafter, Zhi Su brought the qin and had set it up in the pavilion within the inn. The pavillion was surrounded by flowers planted by the innkeeper’s wife; large red and white blossoms bloomed beneath the moonlight, . I cast a peek at Mu Yan beneath lowered lids. He sat under the pavillion; when not shielded by a mask, his face was unusually good looking. His fingers plucked at the qin strings freely. He looked up briefly and cast a smile at me, “If I really play for you every piece that I know, you definitely won’t be able to sleep tonight.”

I did not say anything but thought in my heart that for that to happen, he would have had to play for a lifetime.

The qin sounded, and it was a tune that I had never heard before. I sprawled onto the three legged stone table and cradled my face in my arms, “Mu Yan, you haven’t married yet, have you?”

The playing of the qin suddenly paused He cocked his head to the side and uttered questioningly, “En?”

I said, "Would you be willing to marry a deceased person as your wife?"

His fingers stopped playing. The moonlight shone on his face, casting both light and shadows on his features. He was indescribably good-looking.

I gathered my courage and explained to him, "The girl is quite good looking and of pleasant disposition as well. Elders tend to like her, so there definitely will not be any issues between mother-in-law and daughter in law. She has a rudimentary knowledge of music, literature, calligraphy and art so she won't shame you in front of others. On the other hand, even though she is not very skilled at cooking, she is able to cook some basic dishes... It's only that... it's only that she is dead."

I had praised myself so extravagantly that even I felt that I was a bit too brazen; I could not carry on even if I wanted to.

He listened to me patiently. After a short pause, he looked at me as if he did not know whether to laugh or to cry, he said, "Are you referring to a ghost marriage[1]?"

I did not know whether my hypothetical marriage to him would be considered a ghost marriage. But in the absence of a better definition, I nodded my head.

He looked at me patiently for a while before commencing to play again. He shook his head and said, "I really don't understand what you're trying to do. Are you trying to play matchmaker for a close friend who has passed away?"

I looked at him and said, "En."

The silken string trilled as he laughed, "This is something that only you are capable of. Alas, the Mu family cannot be heirless, so I can only thank you for your kind intentions."

I sprawled back on to the table and closed my eyes. The night breeze was definitely warm and gentle but I felt cold all over instead. Even though I understood that the dead and the living cannot walk the same path, but I could not help but want to try my luck, hoping for a different outcome. It only served to be a greater disappointment in the end.

I wanted so much to tell him, that this masked girl in front of you was the same girl who nearly died from a snakebite on Mount Yanhui all those years ago, all

grown up now. She had always wanted to marry you and had searched for you high and low for three whole years. But how could I tell him that this masked girl is actually a dead person.

That night, accompanied by Mu Yan's music, I did not know when I had fallen, sprawled myself on the three legged table. According to Jun Wei, Mu Yan carried me back to my time sometime around the third hour in the morning. But when I woke up, he had already left. Just like that night on Mount Yanhui three years ago, unbeknownst to me, we had parted ways. I did not have any particularly strong feelings about this, just that the place where the Pearl resided felt empty.

The place we want to go to was the Square City, the capital of the State of Zheng. From the sound of the name, one would have expected the city to be built in accordance with some profound geometric principle. But all this was a misunderstanding. The reason why the city is called Square is because the residents were quite fond of playing mahjong.

The three of us – Jun Wei, Xiao Huang and I – rushed to this city because we received a message by carrier pigeon from Master Jun. He told us that he had accepted a business deal in this city on my behalf. The identity of the patron this time was quite special – she was a noble lady who resides in the palace.

The State of Zheng has many mountains and rivers, so we were travelling by boat for much of the time. But due to Xiao Huang's existence, there were not many boatmen who were willing to ferry us across the river. When we finally found a boatman who was willing to risk life and limb, we had to pay him a king's ransom in order to board his pirate ship[2].

Considering that we could not treat Xiao Huang the way we treated our horses and roast him for sustenance, we could only endure being ripped off. As time went on, our travel funds lessened and lessened, and it seemed unlikely that we would be able to reach our destination. As a last resort, Jun Wei was forced to go up to the boatman and blackmail him, "We have no more money, all we have left are our lives. Are you going to row? If you stop rowing we will let our tiger bite you to death."

Unexpectedly, this method was very effective. Our journey proceeded smoothly for a while until we neared our destination, when someone finally

reported us to the authorities. We were fined a huge sum of money by the local authorities, which we paid with the last of our travel funds.

We were still fifty miles away from Square City, which we could reach within three days travelling on foot. However, we were penniless.

Jun Wei's idea was to sell a book that he had been writing lately; the premise of the story was about a sadomasochistic love, a topic which he expected to be quite popular. Xiao Huang and I were both very happy as we saw this as a way out of our predicament. We set up a store by the roadside in high spirits and with heavy expectations.



The result was we could not sell it.

A long time after that incident, we analysed where we went wrong and concluded that the reason it was unpopular must be because the book did not have any erotic illustrations. But as we did not come to this realization then, we only felt like we had come to the end of the road. After thinking long and hard, we felt that the only way was for Xiao Huang to behave contrary to his nature and perform the act of eating grass for the public.

Just as we were in the process of forcing Xiao Huang to perform in public, we bumped into Baili Jin, who was returning from the mountains. This was an extremely important person. But then and for a long time afterwards, we did not know that he was from the Saint of Medicine's family, that he was the Saint of Medicine Baili Yue's only nephew.

Of course, he had his own reasons for hiding his identity, because his appearance when we first met him definitely did not do justice to his family name: he was not holding a closed fan in his hand and there was no long sword hanging from his waist. Although he was wearing a white robe, it was soiled grey in several places – he definitely could not be described as immortal-like. The old and rickety basket on his back definitely did not inspire someone to shout “Wah – I can tell from one look that you are definitely a good person” or something to that effect.

That scene coincidentally took place just as the sun was dipping into the western horizon. We had already set up our little stage for the performance. The roots and wild vegetables we had collected were placed by the side and Xiao Huang was symbolically tied up beside them.

The farmers from the nearby fields, carrying their tools, passed our set-up on their way home. They surrounded us and quickly formed a large circle.

Before so many pairs of eyes brimming with anticipation, Xiao Huang painfully chewed on a carrot. The farmers were all amazed.

At this time, Baili Jin broke through the crowd and very naturally squatted down beside the pile of wild vegetables. He rummaged through the pile before picking out an exceptionally large white radish. He looked up at Jun Wei and asked, “Wei – how much are you selling this radish?”

Jun Wei: “?”

Baili Jin studied it for a while. I did not know what was the message he was trying to convey through his expression. He looked through the pile of vegetables again, and raised up another carrot: “Wei, if I buy two white radishes, can you throw in a carrot?”

I saw a nerve tick in Jun Wei’s temple. Jun Wei looked at him expressionlessly and pointed at Xiao Huang who was chewing a carrot on one side, signalling to him that we were doing a street performance and were not actually selling radishes and carrots.

Baili Jin calmly return his stare, and exclaimed, “Wa – I can get a tiger for free if I buy the radishes?”

I could only wordlessly look at the nerve throbbing in Jun Wei's temple. I quickly said, "We're not giving away the tiger."

Baili Jin looked at me understandingly and raised the red carrot in his hand, "Oh – never mind. If you're not giving away the tiger, then just give me a carrot."

Jun Wei said, "We're not giving away the radishes either."

Baili Jin held up the white radish, "I didn't ask you to give them to me. I will pay for them, so I'm buying them from you. It's not like I'm cheating you of your money. I'm just asking you to throw in a carrot as part of the deal."

I guessed that Jun Wei had already reached the limit of his patience. Before I could even finish guessing, I saw a grey figure fly over the crowd. Jun Wei was rubbing his temples while he stared at Baili Jin whom he just tossed away. Under the darkening sky, he dusted off his hands before wiping them on my sleeve.

This was the first meeting between us and the youngest member of the Baili family. It was also the first time in Jun Wei's life that he displayed such a macho side of himself.

Translator's Notes

[1] 冥婚 (pinyin. míng hūn), refers to a folk custom where a deceased person is married to either another deceased person or to a living person. I won't go into the history of this culture, but you might have seen it in dramas or movies; to my knowledge, a cockerel is commonly used as an avatar to represent a deceased groom.

[2] In this case, "贼船" (pinyin zéi chuán") literally translates into "a thief's boat". It just means that the boatman in the instance has totally ripped them off, which makes him akin to thieves. He isn't actually a pirate.

Commentary

Jun Fu's thoughts and expressions in this chapter are actually very beautiful in a very melancholic way. I especially loved it when she thought to herself "Even though I understood that the dead and the living cannot walk the same path, but

I could not help but want to try my luck, hoping for a different outcome. It only served to be a greater disappointment in the end.” It’s probably because I’m a real sucker for unrequited love.

Having said all that, Jun Fu and Mu Yan’s story is progressing along nicely. I don’t know if you all feel the love yet (from Mu Yan, since we know that Jun Fu has some pretty serious feelings for him). But at the very least, he definitely appreciates the uniqueness of Jun Fu’s thought process. LOL.

And let me just end with a shout of “Let the Bromance begins”. With such a meet cute between Baili Jin and Jun Wei, can you fault everyone for thinking/hoping that they ended up together?

Categories: [Books](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#), [Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 11.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 11.1

[June 14, 2015](#) by [hamster428](#) [20 Comments](#)



Hi everyone, this is Hamster. Let me preface this post with a few words. No, I'm not moving to Peanuts' house, if you're wondering haha. I've decided to pick up translating Huaxu Yin because I would like to see this Tangqi Gongzi work completed. And in the interest of keeping the chapters together, I have asked Peanuts to let me guest blog on her site.

I'd like to apologize first to those who have been waiting for 13th Moon's story. Because Xiaowen has expressed her intention in continuing that arc, I am actually going to jump to the 3rd story in the novel. It may leave all you Jun Fu and Mu Yan shippers a bit frustrated because you likely have no idea what happened to them in the interim. In regard to that, I haven't the faintest idea either. I skipped all Jun Fu and Mu Yan interactions when I first read the novel (yes, blasphemy, I know), and in translating the first chapter of the 3rd arc, kinda just picked it up in the middle of nowhere myself.

Next, I'd like to apologize to the rest of the readers, because not only do I have very foggy memory of Jun Fu and Mu Yan, I also don't remember anything after Ying Ge's story >_< I thus may have some out-of-context errors in my translations. I ask for your understanding and promise they'll get straightened out when everything's said and

done.

With that said, I am committed to seeing this book through to the end (why do I sound like my boss when he talks to our clients?), so I hope you guys will rejoin me on the journey. Update schedule is likely going to be every other week (because Tangqi chapters are freakishly long~).

Part 3: A Drunken Tale of Snow-filled Hatred

Chapter 1.1:

It made one worry when Jun Wei's reply still failed to come. Mu Yan deemed that with Xiao Huang's protection, there was nothing to worry about. Seeing how optimistic he was, I could not tell him that Xiao Huang had long been pawned to the zoo and I had no idea if he had been bought back yet. From what I knew of Jun Wei, I would say our hope was slim. I then wondered why there were so many gay men in this world and why Jun Wei had to be so exquisite. I became a little heavyhearted. It seemed the Jun family line was likely going to end, after all.

Last year he had even vowed that he would marry me if no one else would. If this was how the dice had rolled, then there was really nothing left to say. Ultimately, distant water could not put out nearby fire. Moreover, we didn't even know where he was right now, so we could only go with the flow. Per Mu Yan's opinion, since it had been some time without Jun Wei's reply, he would take me back to Mount Junyu on his way to the Zhao capital. Mu Yan needed to head to the north where the Imperial City lay, which I reckoned was something he had always intended to do but hadn't until now. I never once believed Mu Yan was so leisure as to take me go sightseeing and immerse in the cultures of various locales. I had begun waiting to hear from him words that essentially meant farewell since long ago. Now that I finally heard them, while I felt sad, I was equally relieved.

Crossing barren hills, through vast plains and flowing rivers, then desolate villages and crow-perched trees, I felt keenly the passage of time. Whenever the sun went down I would count on my fingers the time we had left until we'd say goodbye. Nonetheless, I couldn't delay our journey like the last time. Mu Yan was amused. "Why do you keep looking at me like that? Is there something on my face?" he asked.

I boldly stepped closer to him. "Yes, there is. Come, let me take a look."

He leaned forward, his teasing eyes falling upon my own. "Take a good look, then." I was sure he was joking, but it didn't matter since we'd have to part ways anyway. It should be all right even if I were to be a little shameless. I nodded. "Close your eyes." He obediently did as told. A bluish flame rose from the olive pit charcoal. He sat there waiting amid the chirping of insects, looking as if he was fulfilling his obligation with

pleasure. He made me suddenly want to reach out to touch his face and eyes that were so close within reach, but I did not dare. My palms were sweating by the time I slowly swept a finger across his brow and used all my courage to touch his temple. I'll always remember this moment of warmth and contact. In the end, I couldn't will myself to leave him. No matter what, I just couldn't. These brows, these eyes, this nose, these lips, this handsome countenance, as well as each vivid expression on his face – everything was etched inside of me. Even if we parted ways, I would remember every detail for the rest of my life. He tilted slightly and, pressing his temple to my finger, quietly opened his eyes. "Ah Fu?" My hand flinched as I quickly withdrew it, charcoal fire crackling in the background. A long while later, I showed him my hand: "Look, there was something on your forehead. I've taken it down for you."

He looked at my empty palm. "Where?"

"Huh? Where has it gone?" I pretended to be surprised. He regarded me with the faintest of smiles, propping his chin wordlessly. Often times I did not know what he was thinking, and it confused me. But that was all right. As long as I knew what I was thinking, it was good enough.

Jun Wei said love tends to bring with it melancholy, because we are forever thinking about the outcome. He was right. When I was by Mu Yan's side, I always thought about the outcome. But if I lost Mu Yan, I wouldn't have lost much. I would still be left with his charming image in my memory. And that to me, was the most precious flower that had ever bloomed in my heart.

The swallows had returned from their migration, and roses were bathing under the sunlight. Spring was blossoming in the north as it waned in the south. We hurried along. When we got to the Jiang-Chen border, something I thought would've happened right from the beginning but never did finally came to pass.

It was quite serious.

I got abducted.

When we left the mountain, Master Jun had entrusted Jun Wei to protect me as best he could, for he had feared this day. Just because not many knew the wonder of the Huaxu tune did not mean nobody knew. Legends were passed saying the tune was a magic that could revive the dead, and even went on in detail how a man should practice it, how a woman should practice it, how an elderly should practice it, and how a child should practice it... Now everybody coveted it.

When something becomes the object of desire to many, it can bring destruction. For this reason, there were very few true accounts of the Huaxu tune in circulation. Thus despite being in existence for many centuries, it was still very much a myth. I had

thought that such a stifling secret magic shouldn't be well-known among the populace. Hence in the start when Master Jun let Jun Wei come along to protect me, I had silently opposed the idea. At this time, it became clear Master Jun had had his share of experience.

Day gradually darkened into night. Because I was kidnapped, my limbs were of course tied up. However, I had always been an expert at untying ropes, and was able to quickly get myself out. I could see that I was wrapped up in a quilt, above me were gold tassels on the bed curtain, in front was a tightly-closed six-panel wall divider.

On each of the six panels was an unusual landscape. There was a pair of lovers, sometimes night strolling, sometimes waxing poetic. Two of the panels depicted a gentleman leisurely sitting by a tea set with his zither; he was quite familiar looking. An inkling came to mind, but I immediately squashed the idea, for I felt the depicted man's standard wouldn't be this bad.

The person who abducted me had acted while Mu Yan wasn't around. Like I said, however, he surely couldn't have known that the so-called ancient secret had been sealed into a bead and placed inside of me. Furthermore, he surely couldn't have known I was already dead. Even if he could uncover the secret, no one would believe it. From the beginning of time, in all of Jiu Zhou, I was the only one to have invoked the Huaxu tune from a dead body.

But before I could more carefully analyze the situation at hand, the closed screen was pushed open. I quickly tucked myself back into the quilt, peeked out, and perceived a feeble candlelight.

It was a maid who had opened the screen. After stepping in, she raised the curtains and then stood to the side, as if blending into the night. The one whose presence I could sense better was the girl sitting opposite her. Not really her face, but her general appearance. Her wide sleeves occupied so much space that one could not ignore them. The tiny candle flame could only illuminate a small space, and I thus wasn't able to really see her face. With that said, her icy gaze could eat through my bones.

A while later, when the single candlelight gradually brightened, I noticed a bronze goblet filled with jade-colored wine inside. At last, I caught a glimpse of the girl with the icy eyes. Half of her face was shown under the candlelight while the other half was obscured by the wooden beams' shadows. Her demeanor was frosty, but her beauty was still quite extraordinary.

I couldn't talk because a handkerchief had been stuffed in my mouth. I pretended to struggle. The girl gestured to her maid. But just as she raised her hand, she lowered it back down and laughed at herself: "What's gotten into me? Why should I untie you? You just need your ears today." At this, she drank down the goblet of wine and staggered to

the bed, avoiding the help of her maid. She lifted my chin. After ripping off my mask, she jerked her head away. I didn't see her reaction, but surely, she didn't think I was hiding the Huaxu tune under my mask, did she?

By and by, she ran her thin ivory fingers along the sinuous scar on my forehead as her eyes frosted up and her voice adopted a chilliness: "So you're a pretty one. But didn't you know you aren't supposed to touch other people's things?"

It was very quiet in the room. I raised my head to look her in the eyes. I had no idea what she was talking about, but I didn't want to lose to her. After staring at each other for what seemed to be an eternity, she sneered: "Oh, don't act so uppity. Have you already forgotten what you've done so fast?"

I still hadn't the foggiest idea what she was talking about, but if she didn't kidnap me for the Huaxu tune, then had she grabbed the wrong person?

Nevertheless, I straightened my back. This time, she leaned into my face, her hair skimming my forehead, her breath grazing my ears. "You like him, so while I wasn't there, you deliberately orchestrated an encounter with him, hoping to attract his attention. Like a silly jester, how farcical. Didn't you know there was already someone he loved?"

I stared in bewilderment. Then, as if a flash of light appeared out of thin air, my head exploded. I couldn't believe it. Instinctively, I searched my memory for the image of the woman who assassinated Mu Yan on Mount Bishan. Yet all I could really remember was a sea of roses; it had been late spring in April.

The girl in front of me tilted her head watching my confused expression, her slender fingers pressing the right side of her temple. Only now did I notice that on her raven hair was a silk hairpin in the form of... a dark rose.

If she was Qin Ziyan, then she must not have forgotten Mu Yan. But she had hurt him.

I didn't know how to react to this discovery, neither did I know how I was feeling presently. I only wondered if I had found Mu Yan sooner, if I had sought him out from the crowd before he could meet her, then where would we all be today?

Unfortunately, I looked for him through three whole years without results. I didn't even get to see him before I died. Such was the heavens' will.

She edged closer, pressing her forehead in a frown. With the dim candlelight casting on her flushed tipsy face, coldness seemed to have left her. She was looking at me, but it also seemed as though she was looking through me into some empty space. At length, she slightly pursed her lips and said, "At the time, I was a musician in the Zhao Court. I met him for the 1st time at a royal banquet. He was the general who seized fortresses and extended our land for thousands of miles. Including the princesses, there wasn't a

young lady in the entire Zhao Palace who did not admire him.”

Her gaze landed on my face, her lips slightly upturning. “But he only brought me home with him.” She paused, still looking at me with a pleased expression. “You’ve only known his courteous side, but have you ever seen his patience and tenderness?”

I shook my head. She softly smiled: “What we had together are things you can never know.”

Emotions rose inside me, one after another, as heavy as crushing boulders. But I would not yield to her. It was the same as coming across wolves in the wild. No matter how frightened, you must raise your head to face it. The first to bow is always the one that loses.

My father had never taught me anything useful in my life, except that the more distraught you feel, the calmer you must appear. I actually wanted to ask her, if she liked him that much, why did she have the heart to hurt him? Then after she hurt him so terribly, how could she bear not coming to see him? I just couldn’t understand how hurting someone was an expression of love, as I could not imagine how there were people who liked durians. (Wait, what? Plenty of us exist!)

People tend to be muddled in life, even more so when feelings are involved. All my thoughts were derived from my personal experience, but obviously I was inexperienced in this regard.

Footfalls sounded outside. Her expression altered as she sprang to her feet and pulled the wall divider shut. The light before my eyes instantly faded away, leaving behind only the hazy images of Mu Yan with her, diffusing into swirling clouds of shadows. And with the handkerchief strangling my throat, I had no way of speaking.

Holding on to a last ray of hope, I struggled to sit up. No matter what, the outcome would be the same. I heard three familiar taps on the door before it slowly opened. A voice as pliable as a willow branch on a spring day spoke, accompanied by a soft laughter: “Where have you been, Ziyan?” It was Mu Yan. The woman’s reply was tearful: “I’ve been waiting for you. All this time, I’ve been waiting for you to come to me.”

My shoulders and back suddenly could not bear the weight imposed on them. I slumped against the wall. The same chill right before my death began to spread from my spine. The place where the bead resided suddenly throbbed. It was decidedly strange.

Just then, the bed all of a sudden overturned. By the time I recovered my senses, I saw that I had fallen somewhere. With a dim glimmer of light, I could vaguely discern that this was a long cave. I had fortunately untied myself previously, so even from a great fall, I didn’t suffer any injury. Even though I could feel no pain, I was still afraid of broken limbs.

Leaning against the cave wall looking up, I wondered what was happening in the room at this time.

In my imagination, there must be a starry sky beyond the windowpanes. He would march on the moonlight before opening the door to enter, still charming and nonchalant as always. What do people usually say about these scenes? “From the quivering shadows of the flowers on the wall, I gather that my lover has come.” (1) But he hadn’t come for me.

1. A line taken from *The Story of the Western Wing*.

My logic had been very simple. Since Ziyan stabbed him, I thought she would no longer be his beloved and he shouldn’t have feelings for her anymore. I knew I didn’t have any rights as a dead person, but I had hoped he could find a better girl.

All right, so I am lying. I never once hoped he could find a better girl. To be frank, I am selfish. But if I must choose, I would rather he fell in love with someone else. Anyone but Ziyan. My line of thinking was like Rong Yuan’s. Unfortunately they still met up; it seemed neither could let go of their feelings.

Qin Ziyan was right, I was like a farcical clown. But if this was the so-called love between mature adults, then I really didn’t understand it. I looked at my palm and the lifeline that was no longer there. The more I tried to think, the less I could make sense out of anything. I was suffering so much inside but I didn’t know how else to assuage myself.

I picked up my mask from the ground, gave it a wipe, and put it back on. What else was there to do? This was goodbye. I thought of him, of the fact I’d never get to see him again, of my life ending too early. I first met him when I was only a child and when I did not know what love is. By the time I finally came to understand, he already loved someone else. In the endlessly desolate cave, I slowly slid down, buried my head in my knees and burst into tears.

I felt a little better after I was able to cry it out. Facts have proven that sorrows which could be relieved by crying aren’t real sorrows. But when there’s no other ways to vent, crying it out is still better than nothing. I wiped away my tears with my sleeve and then whispered to myself: “Ah Zhen, from now on you are on your own. Don’t let others worry about you anymore.” The quiet sound echoed in the deep cave and came back to me as though someone was by my side, patiently offering me his comfort. It gave me some courage while also letting me forget I was by myself.

I groped and limped along the cave wall to go out, stepping on many rotting skeletons along the way. I suddenly felt scared. It hadn’t crossed my mind before, but after leaving

Mu Yan, I came to realize I had been well protected. His protection made me think I was just an ordinary girl and forgot that as a deceased person, I shouldn't have any fears. With that said, I shouldn't be afraid in any case. They were all like me – just a pile of bones in some dark cave.

By the time I struggled to get out of the cave, the sky had darkened. There was no starry sky as I had imagined. There was only a torrential rain pouring down over my head like a marching army.

I pushed my way through the night rain. After trapping me in the cave, Qin Ziyang must have thought I'd never be able to escape. However, Mu Yan liked her, and he wouldn't know she was the one who kidnapped me. I thought of those bones I had just tripped over. They were all killed by the miasma inside the cave. She had always wanted to kill me. Too bad I was already dead. Unless the shark bead inside my chest were destroyed, I couldn't die again.

The mountains lay ahead of me like a monster, gaping its giant mouth drenched in blood. Towering old trees lurked in the shadows like quiet phantoms. Beaten by the rain, scattered trumpet vines lay wasted on the ground. Winds screeched past my ears, blasting the rain and seeping a chill into me as cold as freezing ice in the winter. I caught a glimmer in the distant courtyard, but that was the most dangerous place. I didn't know the way to Mount Junyu, I just knew I had to run in the opposite direction of that terrible light. Although I was accustomed to the dark, there were times I couldn't see clearly and stumbled on the slippery mountain road, covering myself in mud. When I thought I had gone far enough and could no longer be tracked, I heaved in relief. Spotting some shrubs by the roadside, I decided to take shelter from the rain. The shark bead had made me more susceptible to the cold than ordinary people. Without a need to hurry, I composed myself and felt the cold rain and mud covering up every inch of my body. *It'll be fine once the rain clears up.* I clenched my teeth and hugged my knees as I silently comforted myself. *It'll be fine once the rain clears up.*

In the mountains, if it rained long enough, all kinds of things could happen. I took into account the various dangers I could be met with, yet I forgot one: that there were predators who waited for their preys in rainy nights. I didn't even know I was surrounded by danger. By the time I discovered this fact, a clouded leopard had stood about ten meters away from me. It seemed to still be young, its blue eyes gleaming like two will-o'-wisp, lighting the mottled pattern on its rain-soaked fur. The young leopard regarded me carefully, perhaps considering what this thing covered with mud in the bushes was, and whether it could be eaten or not. As for me, I only had one thing I could protect myself with: a dagger I had picked up from the cave.

At this point, I couldn't afford to think too much. I also couldn't be so naïve as to think

that Xiao Huang or Jun Wei would suddenly fall from the sky. Or even more miraculously, Mu Yan falling from the sky. If I had such a idea, the only outcome awaiting me was death.

After staring at each other for a while, the fierce leopard finally made its move. I had no idea where I suddenly got my useless courage from. Instead of running away, I clenched the dagger and awaited its neck. Of course, I missed my target. No matter how badly its sharp claws cut me, since I wasn't afraid of pain, it didn't matter. I nevertheless couldn't stand by and watch it eat me up bite after bite, so I kept at slicing its throat with my dagger. Too preoccupied, all I could hear was the roar of pain. In my mind was only one thought – to hurry and kill it, don't let its roars lead other beasts here.

The moment the dagger plunged into the leopard's throat, blood gushed out like a cherry blossom hail, sprinkling on my chest before diffusing out in a glaring bright red. With the open sky high above me, in the endless rainy night, the dagger shakily dropped to the ground. Beads of blood seeped into the muddy soil. I only heard raindrops falling, I could not hear my own breathing. All around, there was no other living thing. Fear finally crept from my feet to my mind. Jun Wei believed I was brave and unfearing. That was when I was young. After I grew up, I realized there were many things I didn't want to lose. My courage therefore shrank, and my bravery was merely a front. I covered my eyes as I thought to a moonlit night one month ago when we encountered a wolf. The sky was filled with endless stars that night, casting a silvery luster across the whole of Mount Bishan. At the time, someone had stood in front of me with a hint of a smile: "Don't tell me you haven't discovered there was a wolf trailing behind us." He then patted my back to comfort me. "It's all right. Haven't I killed it? What are you afraid of?"

I knew full well crying was useless, but I couldn't help it. Finally in this lonely rainy night, I burst out crying once more, tears spilling through the cracks of my fingers. I missed him. "Mu Yan, where are you? I'm afraid."

I'm so afraid.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 11.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 11.2

[June 28, 2015](#) by [hamster428](#) [23 Comments](#)



Part 3 – Chapter 1.2

I couldn't be certain how much time had passed but the rain still showed no sign of letting up. In the distance, a snarling like that of a tiger faintly sounded.

I struggled to climb up from the mud and briefly considered whether an egg would win against a rock. The answer was no, it wouldn't. I was able to kill a young leopard with my strength (or lack thereof) only because Heaven had

nodded off. If I wanted to kill a matured tiger, then I had better pray Heaven never wakes up again.

I obviously couldn't afford to be so optimistic. I wondered what would happen if the tiger were to swallow the shark bead whole. Master Jun said inside the bead sealed the Huaxu enchantment. On his own, a dead human could live on for another three years. That being the case, I wondered how many years the bead could add to a beast's life. Worst case scenario, there would be an immortal tiger roaming the world after tonight, and it wouldn't be Xiao Huang. I couldn't even begin to imagine the consequences this would have on the natural food chain and ecosystem... I ran for life in the other direction. So be it, I didn't have any talents, I probably wouldn't live past tonight in any case. But even if I couldn't get out of this forest alive, I still mustn't bring trouble to others.

In spite of my fear, I held a tight grip on the dagger that had been washed clean by the rain water and tremblingly pressed it against my chest. Once the tiger discovered me, I must stab myself and destroy the bead.

I nervously waited, but I did not hear its roaring any longer. All I heard behind me were staggering footsteps in the rain. It was raining heavily, but I could hear his ragged breathing.

"Ah Fu." His voice was so hoarse that it didn't sound like his anymore. I stood there stock-still as though I had waited for centuries and millennia, but I didn't have the courage to look back. I detected the sword in his hand from the corner of my eye, the gemstone on its hilt glinting a faint green sheen and reflecting the conspicuous red patch on his sleeve that bloomed like a smudge of rouge.

It's him. I felt his hand coming to rest on my shoulder, which paused slightly before he pulled me into his arms. The world came to a complete silence despite the heavy downpour. All I felt was that forever was within reach, and everything else was inconsequential. He pressed his lips against my ear, his respiration steadying. "You scared me to death," he murmured at length.

It's him. I plainly had no sense of smell but the inexplicable scent of plum blossoms was meandering around me. Shakily, I clung to his arm. All at once, it was as if I could see thousands of plum blossoms blooming across fields of snow.

It's him. "I thought I'd never get to see you again," I heard my quivering voice speak up. His hug tightened around me while carefully avoiding the shoulder wound the leopard had left, his cold fingers caressing my eye.

Just moments ago I had thought I wouldn't live past tonight. But now that Mu Yan was here, all my trepidation suddenly dissolved like thin air. Instead, surging in its place was a sadness I couldn't control. Because I didn't want him to see the weak side of me, I was going to act as if I didn't care. But I couldn't; tears had gushed out. I wept uncontrollably. Mu Yan quietly held me, his fingers clasping on my mask to wipe away both rain water and tears – a futile endeavor. Some time later, he pressed his cheek to my forehead and sighed: "I feel so helpless when you cry."

Long ago, I had thought to myself that if there were someone I held most dear, I would strum all my happiness and cry all my sorrow to him. The one I held dear, at this time, was right here beside me.

Without seeing him, I felt myself being slowly turned around. Cold fingertips were stroking my hair before they came to stop at the corner of my eye. "Can you walk?"

I nodded, stopped, and then shook my head. By the time I was picked up, his voice was ringing in my ears: "I don't know where you're injured. Tell me if it hurts."

I shook my head, stopped, and then nodded. He must be feeling so sorry for me, the kind of sorry feeling one would afford an oriole whose wings had broken. How I wished this could be love. I knew it was just a fantasy, but even if it were, I wanted to stay in it a little longer.

Mu Yan carried me back to the inn. Neither of us spoke the entire way. The rain itself still showed no sign of easing up.

Zhisu, whom I hadn't seen in a long time, was waiting in front with an umbrella in hand. I wondered why she was suddenly here. Imaginably Mu Yan's bodyguards had always followed us in stealth. They usually acted as if they didn't exist, but once their master was put in danger, they'd drop down from the sky and swoop in like the wind. Now I was made curious, because honestly, how were they any different from assassins and bandits?

Zhisu closed the umbrella and prepared to retrieve me from Mu Yan's arms. As I was pondering whether to hop down or not, I felt Mu Yan's grip tightening around my waist and knees. I raised my head and, in the dim light of the lantern, saw his thinly pressed lips, rain-soaked hair, and deathly pale face.

I'd never seen him looking so cold – as cold as the layers of water that had frozen on a winter lake. I reached my hand out to cling onto his shoulder. The moment I touched his collar, his footsteps halted on the ground: "Does your wound hurt?"

Rain water was dripping down from his hair. A gust of wind suddenly knocked Zhisu's lantern swinging and snuffed the light out. In the dark, I gingerly held onto his neck. Sensing no resistance from him, I softly answered, "No." I paused to think and then asked him: "I'm heavy, aren't I? Am I troubling you?"

I already knew what his reply was going to be. I was sure he would sneer at me with words like these: "You can still recognize that you're troubling me at a time like this?" But he didn't say any such thing this time around. A lightness landed on my head, tingly and warm. By the time I realized what it was, a warm flush had spread across my face.

The wooden corridor of the inn creaked under his feet. The door to the room opened and behind the wall divider depicting faint purple irises sat a steaming bath. Water vapor had clouded the candlelight on the bronze chandelier.

Mu Yan let me down and then checked the wounds I'd sustained. When he discovered only a few scratches on my shoulders, he called Zhisu in to give her some instructions. As he made a movement to leave, I held onto his sleeve and demanded: "Where are you going?" His face finally showed a smile. "I'm just leaving to change. I'll come back after you finish your bath."

Despite having heard of Zhisu's adept wound dressing, I had to make up excuses to politely refuse her help. She found it strange, but likely deeming that we mystic folks had our secrets to guard, she went away and let me treat myself.

Luckily I still had a bottle of plaster Master Jun had given me when we first set out. Although it had gotten wet in the rain, it was still usable. I spread some on my wounds and then put on a fresh change of clothes. By then, Mu Yan's knocking sounded on the door, neither short nor long, still those leisure three

taps.

The door opened to Mu Yan, standing at the threshold and dressed in all black. Silver threads embroidered his collar and sleeves while in his hand was a ginger drink to fend off the cold. While waiting for him to come, during my bath, I had wondered what he would be coming for. I thought and thought, and finally decided that it didn't matter at all what he was coming for. As long as I could have another second with him, he could come even if only to give me a bowl of ginger drink.

As it turned out, he really did come just to give me a bowl of ginger drink. My first thought was how stupid I had been. Why didn't I suppose he would come to confess his feelings for me instead?!

I was finished with the ginger drink but he still hadn't moved an inch from his seat. He sat bedside watching me finish the last drop, saying: "I was twelve when I went with my father on my first expedition."

What a perfect opening line for a bedtime story. I placed the empty bowl onto the nightstand, pulled my quilt up, and leaned back to listen.

"As a hardy young fool, I got tricked by the enemy and trapped in the deep mountains. It had also been a rainy night. A hundred elite men under my command all sacrificed their lives, their bodies strewn across the mountain. They had managed to protect and hide me in a cave. While hidden, I heard the bellows of warring beasts not far from there. I realized very quickly they were fighting over my men's corpses. At the time, I was injured by an arrow. Despite laying low inside a cave, the scent of blood would sooner or later lure these beasts to me. But if I were to build a fire to drive them away, I would lead the enemy to my hideout. It was a deadend no matter which way I looked." He leaned on his hand as though he was deep in thought – a contemplative look entirely different from what I was used to seeing.

It was obvious he seldom told his sister stories. How could bedtime stories be this chilling? I tugged his sleeve and asked in anxiousness: "And then what?"

Mu Yan lifted his head to look at me. Under the candlelight, his eyes were as dark as the depths of the sea: "In all the years I've lived, that was the most precarious situation I've ever encountered. But I didn't feel any fear at the time."

“I know, you’re very brave,” I nodded in agreement. “B-but what happened afterwards? How did you escape?”

He picked up the teacup without answering my question. Playing with it in his hand, he went on: “I had thought that if I didn’t feel fear even then, then nothing in life would rattle me anymore.”

He paused, and then lifted his eyes at me to say: “Including the time you saw me stabbed by Qin Ziyan.”

Upon seeing the surprise on my face, he softly smiled while continuing to play with the cup in his palm. “I was fully awake. Where on my body she would be stabbing, what injury I would sustain, how long I would need to recover, and how much time my younger brother would have to commit treason.”

The cup had turned one full rotation in his hand. “It was highly risky. One small mistake could’ve taken my life. And yet when the dagger came down as suspected, I merely adjusted my position to brace myself against it without any emotions such as fear or fright.”

He transferred the teacup to his left hand and casually added: “It’s as if I wasn’t born with an intrinsic fear. I just innately lack that emotion.”

I was robbed of words for a length of time. “Then what if the stabbing had killed you?” I managed to say at last. I thought of Qin Ziyan, of him, of his meticulous plan, of whether his relationship with Qin Ziyan was real or pretense, but in the end I didn’t mind any of those. What bothered me was “what if”. What if he had been killed by Qin Ziyan and died in front of me that day? I had searched for him all my life. When I finally found him, it was with him covered in blood lying in front of me, and I didn’t even know who he was. I exhaled in relief; luckily the heavens did not let that happen.

The teacup was placed back onto the table. In the flickering candlelight, he softly repeated my words ‘what if’ and chuckled: “There isn’t going to be any what ifs. It’s like solving a math problem. There are thousands of steps wherein each step needs to be precise. That means there can’t be any mistake. If there is, then it just means I was careless when I solved the problem...”

I interjected: “But not everything in life is like solving a math problem. Anyone with emotions will feel fear, and then there would be that one in a million chance

of something going wrong.”

He leaned on his hand. “Really? Then tell me, A Fu, why do people fear?”

I didn’t even need to think about this one. “Because there are things they want to protect.”

He watched me for a long time before unhurriedly admitting: “You’re right. That was why this was the first time I felt afraid.”

I didn’t know how the story had taken this turn; my brain was failing to keep up. At length, I stared at him: “But you said you’ve never been afraid...”

He ever slightly shook his head and took my hands in his: “I was very afraid tonight.”

I froze. When I understood what he was saying, my entire body stiffened, I slightly broke away by instinct but he held me back and went on to say: “It was my fault. I shouldn’t have left you by yourself at the inn.”

“You’re not really to blame...”

“Even knowing you’re daft, and slow, and gullible...”

“... That’s enough,” I glared at him. “You...”

“I like you.”

I reeled at this turn of event, my hands shaking badly.

This beautiful story, these beautiful words, they must all belong in a dream. I closed my eyes instinctively and sensed the silence around us. The only thing I heard was the subsiding rain beyond the windowpanes.

Sure enough it was just a dream. Why would pies ever fall from the sky? By the time the rooster crowed its morning crows, I discovered it had all been a golden millet dream in disappointment.

The window made a squeak. My eyes flew open to see a wet sparrow flying inside. I nervously eyed my bed front and detected a pair of shoes. Gazing further upward, I saw Mu Yan frowning at me: “I was waiting for your answer. How could you shut your eyes and pretend to fall asleep?”

So it hadn’t been a dream.

“Wh-what answer?” I stammered back.

He pulled my hands from under the quilt and held them in his own, smilingly searching my eyes. “I like you, A Fu. Do you feel the same way?”

I stared blankly at him, my mind suddenly vacant. “Do you like me,” I heard my even voice, “the way you like your sister? If that’s how you like me, then I also like you the way I like my brothers...” Oh, for Heaven’s sake, what was I saying?

He gently pulled me over and slightly bowed his head so that we could meet each other’s eyes. He watched me in a strangely serious manner, stressing each syllable: “What do you think my feelings for you are, Ah Fu? I’ve said before that there are many advantages to marrying me. Every promise I make to you, I shall keep. I’ll have no one but you in this life, will you in turn have me?”

I saw white plum blossoms burgeoning, woven into a white veil and gradually rising in this cold rainy night, forming a vast haziness in the room. All were illusions, of course, but they brought me back to that star-filled night I first met him and made me feel as though I was seeing white plum blossoms bursting on the hillside on a February night. With a smile on his lips, he quietly watched me. Cold draft rushed through the hole the sparrow had poked in the window. Crepe myrtle trees swayed outside in full bloom. In the wind, their purple petals emitted a dark glow against the shadows of the night.

It was already a blessing that Heaven had let us meet again. I had also hoped that he would like me back, but never in a million years did I think it would come true. Not even once. He asked if I would have him. Why wouldn’t I? And yet, I wasn’t human.

In this state, I didn’t even dare to hug him.

The living and the dead dwell in two different worlds. He was the one I loved the most, the one I treasured dearly, the one I wanted to protect, and the one I never wanted to hurt; nodding my head would be the easiest thing to do. But if there were to be a day when he found out the person he loved was a deceased corpse, what would he do then? And what would I do?

Just as though I had lived through an entire lifetime, I gathered all my courage to take hold of his finger and shakily place it onto my nose. His countenance altered. I didn’t dare to watch his next expression. At long last, I tried to tamper

the grief within down as I asked him: “Do you feel it...? Mu Yan, I don’t have any breathing.”

His fingertip stilled. After saying those words, I felt as if I could say everything. “Aren’t you surprised that I’m never afraid of pain?” I bit my lip, struggling to move past the lump in my throat. “It’s because I cannot feel pain, or smell the fragrance of flowers, or taste those delicacies from the restaurants you always rave about. I act as if I love shrimp dumplings when they actually taste no different from wax simply because I had liked them in the past.”

Looking up, I covered my eyes as tears began to fall. It was all over. I leaned back against the bed curtain like someone holding onto a driftwood in the middle of the sea: “To hear that you want to marry me is something I couldn’t even dream of. But aren’t you afraid to marry me when I’m like this?” That was it. Everything was finished now.

Some time passed before his cold fingers slowly swept along the silver mask from my ear to my forehead. Not wanting to cry over spilled milk, I waited for him to peel off my mask.

I was too afraid to open my eyes by the time the mask was removed. He must have seen my ghastly face and the long scar on my forehead. This repulsive girl who was walking the fine line between life and death – what would he think of me?

There was a story that told of a puppet who fell in love with her owner. By some serendipitous fate, she was turned into a human girl under a sorcerer’s spell and was able to marry the man she loved. The enchantment eventually wore off one day, however. After the magic vanished, her owner fainted in fright seeing the puppet turn back to her original form. With only remnants of her consciousness left, she collapsed by her owner’s side and used a knife to mutilate herself.

At this moment, I was that self-mutilated puppet. Her master was affrighted when he saw her; little did he know that she was even more scared than he.

At length, the hand on my brow slowly swept past my temple to the left ear where the scar began. It was where I least wanted him to see. Yet his hand insisted on stopping there, blocking my last little courage to even utter those

ruthless words commonly found in Jun Wei's novels: "Our fate ends thus. Let's not meet again."

After a while, he brushed my hair aside. Amid the clanking window frames, he murmured to me: "Ah Fu, open your eyes and look at me."

I nervously wrung my sleeves. I didn't think I could reject his entreaty while fearing, at the same time, that I'd see what I didn't want to see once I opened my eyes. In the end, emotions overcame reason. I opened my eyes in nervousness to see an expression on Mu Yan's face I had never seen before. It didn't, however, resemble disgust or fear. Instead, he seemed to be facing a war in which he didn't have a full grasp over the outcome – he was tense and tentative, almost to the point of deference.

I stared uncertainly at him.

His furrowed brow relaxed as he pulled me closer to him. "You don't know how glad I am that you can tell me these things."

"Aren't you scared?" I instinctively brought my hand up to block the scar on my left forehead.

He shook his head as if he had heard something funny. "Why should I be?"

How could he not? There were nights in my sleep when I would think of my undead state and couldn't help from feeling terrified. If even I had felt that way, how could he so calmly accept it?

Facing the funny-looking girl who was covering her forehead in the bronze mirror, I retreated into the shadows and bitterly said, "I'm completely different from living and breathing people. As you can also see, I'm a freak."

He drew me from the shadows and studied me thoughtfully, scolding me with the path of his eyes and then immersing me in those frozen lakes. I turned away from his dichotomous gaze. Leaning forward, he pried my hand away from my forehead and held it in his. "Why do you think that you're a freak? If even the world renowned..."

At this, he looked down with a dry chuckle and spoke as if he were talking to himself: "I had thought it might be... but I didn't think it really was." When he looked up again, he gave the unsightly scar a brush: "If I could've predicted in

the past, right now we..." He did not finish his thoughts. I didn't know what he wanted to say, but I vaguely understood they were things I could not and needed not to understand.

"Cheer up." His hand came to rest on my cheek. "This tiny scar doesn't affect your beautiful face at all. You're the prettiest girl I know." He wiped my tear stains with his thumb as he carefully regarded me. "Leave those things to me. All you need to do is try your best to stay alive until I find a way, can you do that?" Besides nodding I couldn't do anything else. If this was a dream, it was best I didn't wake up again.

While I was nodding vigorously, a piece of engraved jade pendant had dropped around my neck. He studied the masterpiece dangling before my chest and broke into a winsome smile: "This is my betrothal gift to you. I gave you the most important thing my mother left me. What will you give me?"

I didn't know what to give him. I searched my entire body and turned everything out. There was half a bottle of plaster left, plus the small jade tiger he gave me last time, along with a half-size portrait of his I secretly drew, as well as a white engraved jade hairpin I especially bought for him but had not had a chance to give away.

He gave me a curious look. "These are..."

I pushed the lot of them to him. "Take your pick." I had no money, so I couldn't afford expensive things. I just hoped there would be something he liked out of these knickknacks.

He regarded me for a moment before picking up the white jade hairpin. "Did you draw that painting so you could buy this hairpin for me?"

I nodded in embarrassment, awkwardly explaining to him: "I heard this is crafted from an ancient jade with a history of two hundred years. The fine workmanship is said to have been done by some famous artisan. The shop owner insisted on three hundred coins..." Yet to finish, I saw that the candlelight had been obscured, for he was leaning over and dropping a kiss on my lips without any warning. Warm breath tickled my cheek. I stared at him wide-eyed, not realizing other girls would close their eyes in moments like these. At this distance, I took a good look at his long lashes and eyes that could smile. I was so

useless that I didn't even know how to return a kiss. He patiently coaxed me into slightly parting my lips and letting him gently steal inside for a taste. Thinking of the bumpy road we had passed, my eyes burned as tears gushed out.

He leaned against my forehead, dried my waterworks and chuckled. "Crybaby."

Kneeling in front of him, I hung onto his neck and sobbed in refute: "I'm not a crybaby!" He ruffled my hair: "Is that so? Care to give me a justification?"

I slightly left him. "Fine, I admit that I'm a crybaby, but crying isn't a shameful thing. At least in my opinion, tears are the last thing on earth we need to fight back. There were times when I wanted to hold it back so that people would think I was strong. But when I could no longer hold it back, I didn't. That's because I later realized that 'being strong' is only a thing your mind made up. Crying doesn't mean you aren't strong. After crying your heart out, you can still stand up and know which way to take or what things to do. And that's the kind of person I want to become. Think about it, if I can't even shed tears, then what will I use to prove my fears and worries? What will I use to prove that I'm still alive?"

The sea color in Mu Yan's eyes glinted in the candlelight as though a star had fallen in them. Outside, the wind and rain had taken their rest.

Some time later, he gathered me into his arms. "Ah Fu, from now on you can cry all you want to me."

I leaned on his shoulder and felt as though I was floating inside a dream. This was my heart's longing, my very own Huaxu dream. As his dark hair brushed across my cheek, a little tree took roots from the depths of my heart, bursting into a lush canopy of radiant blooms. Cast on the bed mantle, our embracing shadows were all that filled my eyes.

...
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So shippy I can't take it~



[Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 12.1

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 12.1

[July 12, 2015](#) by [peanuts](#) 7 Comments



Dear readers, if you don't know the big news about the author of this novel by now, click [here](#). Because of this, hamster will not be continuing with the translation after this chapter. As a reader, I know you'll be disappointed but we must respect hamster's wishes since her heart is not in it anymore. Anyhow I want to thank her for translating the 2 chapters.

The blog always tries its best to finish any novel which it had started. When hui3r can't continue with the translation, I tried to find another capable individual to continue where she has left off and found hamster. Unfortunately this happened and we are back to square one. I won't comment on the author's questionable characteristics and I assure you that the blog doesn't support plagiarism of any kind. So far, there is no compelling evidence like in Ten Miles of Peach Blossoms that this novel has been plagiarized.

Part 3 – Chapter 2.1 (translated by hamster)

We finally received a letter from Jun Wei this morning and learned that he was in the company of Bai'li Jin. To be completely honest, I had almost forgotten this white-attired gentleman. In the letter, he said they were conducting a research in Peizhong on how to precisely control the transformation from a human to a beast and vice versa by substance.

At first, I didn't know what he meant by 'vicious endurance 受'. I racked my brain for half a day and came to surmise that perhaps he had meant 'vicious beast 兽' (the two characters are homonyms). Jun Wei had no understanding of sorcery and was better at running errands. He might have been pulled into doing these free labor work after meeting Bai'li Jin. The letter revealed they were still in the early stages of the research. They first needed to locate a drug that could turn people into beasts and asked if I had any ideas to offer. I didn't think there was one. If his goal was beast transformation, he could always buy some aphrodisiac. With that said, there are many things that shouldn't be allowed to freely transform. People who consumed the aforementioned aphrodisiac, for example, would turn into animals. And when these animals consumed more aphrodisiac, they'd turn even more... animalic, which would then lead to the procreation of a litter of little beasts...

After hearing about this, Mu Yan thought for a moment and decided that he had better take me to Peizhong instead. It made me feel as though I was being sent to a babysitter because my parents were having to leave for something important. Similar parents who left for important businesses often did not come back, however. As a result, the children who got left behind would grow into rotten adolescents... My first instinct was to follow Mu Yan, but he believed that I should wait for him in safety somewhere else. Peizhong was apparently that impregnable haven.

Despite my immediate claim that I wanted to stick with him through thick and thin, he skillfully deflected and dismissed my proposal. "Some places are dangerous for women but only a little bothersome for men. You'll worry me more by following along."

I should trust him, but I still wanted to craft my way out of being taken away. "Didn't you know that Jun Wei has always wanted to marry me. How can you be

so stupid and try to send me to his side? Isn't that more dangerous?" Only until I finished these words did I remember he had always been competitive. I was immediately picked up and thrown into the carriage. "I'd like to see him try," he declared.

We rode overnight directly to Peizhong.

Wei and Chen shared a narrow strip of water called the Duanhe River which started at Peizhong of Chen. But Peizhong wasn't famous owing to this river. Rather, the city was known for its swordsmithing family, the Gong'yi clan.

The Gong'yi clan boasted a long history, having had ancestors who were involved in the war between the humans and the giants which took place at the Jushi Basin. In time, they washed their hands of weaponry and established businesses in Peizhong. For many generations, they specialized in the swordsmithing trade and, because of their military merits, were able to enjoy special privileges granted by the crown. Before they were conferred titles by the State of Chen, they were already well on their way to being the country's wealthiest. Every Chen king would send his most beloved princess to marry into the Gong'yi family, resulting in entangled bloodlines between this clan and the royalties. Most people reckoned the Chen kings had chosen to do so in order to win over the Gong'yi family's wealth, which I sometimes begged to differ. But what ever the case might be, 700 years of heritage and 25 generations of the Gong'yi clan were all burned to the ground in a great fire seven years ago.

A great many things had happened seven years ago. I was young and ignorant, and while living at Qingyan Temple, had heard the news that a distant family I had never met before had been destroyed in a fire. It came in the form of a rumor passed through the imperial ancestral walls; I had felt that it didn't have anything to do with me.

"As a Wei princess," my master had said, "you should understand a little about what is going on in the world. The destruction of the affluent Gong'yi clan is akin to the amputation of the Chen King's arm. No matter what, this is a good thing for Wei."

I had thought to myself then: who knows if it wasn't the Chen King who did the deed himself?

Master was in rumination for a long while. Then, for the first time, I heard from him the legend of the Qianhe Beast. The Qianhe Beast was a mythical creature whose blood, after a thousand tribulations, formed a flowing stream. It was Gong'yi clan's guardian deity which slept beneath the Taihao River and guarded the Gong'yis through lifetimes of peace.

But that was precisely the issue. How could such a powerful family that also had the protection of a guardian beast be destroyed just in the span of one night? Since the Chen King had already been ruled out, there could only be one explanation: the Gong'yi clan's destruction came at its own guardian's hand. What I took away from this story was that it was risky to keep a guardian beast. My master had been more farsighted: "Many things in life are karmic. There must be a reason for disaster to befall on the Gong'yi clan, as there would be a reason should one day Wei is destroyed. If you cannot understand karma, you should at least be able to understand consequences. Whatever it is you do, think about its consequences first."

My impression of the Gong'yi clan persisted from those days till now due to my master's remarks. On top of everything else, I felt such a pity that so much money had been burned clean. Of course, whether this old family had truly perished as we speculated remained yet a mystery. I also heard that two years later, the twenty-fifth head of the Gong'yi clan, Gong'yi Fei, had rebuilt their clan from the ruins. The Gong'yi clan did not remain in the swordsmithing trade after the restoration, however, but switched to banking and jewelries. These were all things that were later retold.

The reason why I suddenly recalled these legends and stories was because the place Mu Yan wanted to send me to was the Gong'yi clan in Peizhong. Before he returned, I were to wait there for him. Upon reflection, I didn't think it was a problem. Isn't life about waiting and being waited for? The distance between two points is but measured by people's hearts. If in the past, you were next to each other but felt distant, then you'd hope that in the future you could be close at heart even if you were far away. The best state is still right next to each other both in distance and heart, of course.

In under a day, we had reached the foothill of Guzhu Mountain within Peizhong.

According to Mu Yan, the Gongyis' private estate, the Hibiscus Manor, was built on the side of Guzhu Shan. Tomorrow, someone would come to lead us up the mountain. At the thought that Jun Wei and Xiao Huang were nearby at this moment, no matter where they were exactly, I didn't doubt we'd get to finally meet. There was even less doubt that when we did meet, Jun Wei would grill me about what had happened during the time we parted, and I wouldn't be able to explain to him the injuries I had sustained.

I lay in bed, admitting to myself that I did miss him a little during our separation. Even though this guy sometimes had a screw loose, when his screw was on right, he was a good promising young man. With that said, I didn't want him to lecture me, so I had no choice but to delay our meeting for a few days. As my thoughts wandered, the haziness in my mind signaled to me that I was getting sleepy. What we call 'death' is nothing but darkness, and everything in this world eventually comes back to the dark one day. This darkness where it is difficult to move around is the sleep of the dead. At the moment I felt as though I was lying in a coffin buried underground, when the familiar darkness was climbing over me, a light suddenly tore before my eyes. I was convinced that my eyes weren't open at this time, nor was I blinking. And yet I clearly saw that light suddenly bursting open. It quickly engulfed the space and then gradually dissipated like a fog. In its wake was a paved stairway with over a hundred steps made from green stone; sitting at the top was a splendid gate.

Under the drizzling rain, mauve hibiscuses loomed on the mountainside. A towering gate, exquisite columns, and countless buildings came into view. Hanging on the storied gate was a large colorful bead curtain. It slightly rolled in the wind, producing jingling clanks.

Standing beside the bead curtain was a woman who was holding a paper umbrella, its bamboo handle curving upward while its canopy was absence of embellishment – it was like a funeral object in its pure white color. The handle slightly raised to expose a woman's forehead that was adorned by a black jade headband. Next came a pair of slender eyebrows over two cold eyes, a tall nose, and eventually pale lips that slightly pressed together. The only other color to contrast her white dress was her loose dark hair that fell to her ankle like an inky waterfall. She called to mind a sculpture that had been carved from ice.

The green stone three steps away had a small crack in it. A man, also dressed in white, was seen bending over to pick up a shiny black bracelet. When he raised his head, I noticed that his facial features actually looked very much like the woman's. The only differences were that his brows weren't as slender as her crescent moon ones and his eyes weren't as cold as her frozen spring ones.

Even though he was also robed in white, his cuffs were embroidered with purple hibiscuses. Just past the sleeves, his slender fingers were seen holding the black bracelet: "Is this bracelet yours, miss?" A faint smile was glinting in his eyes as he added: "Have we met before?"

The drizzling rain continued. Doused by rainwater, the moss on the green stone turned a darker color. In the great bronze mirror suspended from the white jade hooks lining atop the building was a mountain full of red flowers.

The handsome young man slightly gazed up at the woman who was leaning against the rainbow curtain at the summit. In the misty rain, she opened her paper umbrella and approached him step by step. Rainwater exposed the yellow linings on her white embroidered slippers.

Standing one step above him, she received the jade bracelet that had been polished by the rain, grazing his fingertips with her luminescent ivory fingers. He held onto them. "Thank you," she said at length while gazing down at his slightly dazed look.

She waited for him to let go. A lone flute gradually soared from the distance. He did not let go. "I am Gong'yi Fei of Peizhong. Do I have the honor of knowing your fair name, miss?"

She slightly raised the paper umbrella and, after looking at him for the longest time, spoke with a voice that rang like clashing gems: "Qing Jiujiu of Yong'an."

My eyes flew open. If I could breathe, I would've gasped for air. A full moon hung outside, spreading its quiet beam through the windowpanes and casting scattered shadows in front of my bed.

That wasn't a dream, but a consciousness the Huaxu enchantment had captured. This consciousness hovered alone on Guzhu Mountain, wrapped up in fog and rain. It seemed to have been treasured in spite of its coldness, like fleeting illusions in this glorious world, like a lonely ink-wash painting waiting for

someone to fill in the last stroke.

A consciousness wandering between heaven and earth that was perceived by the Huaxu enchantment could only be the memories left behind by a deceased person, and persistent memories, no less.

A mountain entrance, a multicolor curtain, a drizzling sky, a paper umbrella, the hibiscus season, and the meeting between a man and a woman. These must all be of major significance to the person who died. Recalling the scene I had just seen in front of the gate, I assumed the dead one was the man who wouldn't let go of the woman's hand. It made me feel a little wistful. But as I recalled their names, something didn't quite feel right to me. If he didn't share the same name with someone else, Gong'yi Fei of Peizhong should be the 25th head of the Gong'yi clan who was coming to take us uphill tomorrow. Then that's to say... the consciousness I saw had belonged to the woman in white. It turned out *she*, Qing Jiujiu of Yong'an, was the one who died.

I couldn't sleep that night. I kept sensing whirling shadows in front of me without being able to actually see what they were.

I woke up the next day amid the sound of rippling water. Under a bright sky, a few unknown birds were cheerfully chirping by the window lattice. It was a summer morning.

I climbed down from bed and rubbed my eyes as I opened the window, hearing wings fluttering away as I did. Peering into the yard, I saw Mu Yan sitting cross-legged under a mimosa tree. He was almost always playing the zither every time we parted. To his side stood Zhisu while not far from them stood a white-robed man, basking in the backlight. I could not see his face, but I gathered he was here to pick me up – the Gongyis' coachman, perhaps.

Pompom-like flowers covered the large mimosa tree. Golden morning light filtered through the foliage, eloquently falling onto the silk strings and dancing on Mu Yan's gliding fingers.

Flowing from the zither were long soft notes like a hurricane sweeping across the Gobi desert. Only he could pluck sounds like these, sounds that could trickle slowly and warmly to my heart. I opened the door and ran out.

His playing halted. At the same time, I perceived my foot was tripping over

something. As I was about to lose my balance and stumble forward, Mu Yan quickly walked over and wrapped an arm around me. “It’s still a bit too early to be throwing yourself at me like this, don’t you think? You really make me flustered with all this love I’m receiving.” I was obviously the one who should be flustered! But the longer I got to hold him, the better it was. I took the opportunity to shrink into his arms and then glanced askance to my feet. It turned out it was a clump of grass.

A cough sounded behind me. It sounded fake enough that I was too lazy to reason with it. Perhaps because I didn’t speak even after a long time, his voice came from above: “Ah Fu? Are you all right?” I rubbed my nose and tightly clasped his waist, mumbling back: “I’m fine. Aren’t you thrilled I’m letting you hold me a little longer?”

In those novels of Jun Wei’s, I remembered farewells always occurred under a drizzling sky while the parties saying goodbye clasped their hands with tears in their eyes, drinking wine and snapping willow branches to give away as gifts. But it was a glorious morning at the moment. Under the bright sun, I couldn’t find a willow anywhere in sight. There was really no way to create a sorrowful atmosphere. I didn’t want to leave Mu Yan so it stood to reason that leaving him was a sad thing, but ever since I knew he also liked me back, those feelings of sadness and reluctance all turned into sweetness. I kept telling myself he would come back to me and we would be seeing each other again. My courage thus multiplied and there was no more sadness.

Still, it was goodbye and I should express *something*. Without willow trees, the only thing I could do was take some other branches nearby as a substitute. I strained to break off a small mimosa branch and solemnly placed it onto Mu Yan’s palm.

As I was about to say a few words to him, a laughter sounded. I looked up to see a white-attired man not far from there. His position was very cunning. He stood quite close yet far enough that I could not see his face. I could only see that he was playing with something similar to a black bracelet in his right hand. Not being able to see his face despite staring hard, I decided to speak to Mu Yan. But when I turned around, I saw him staring unfathomably at the mimosa branch in his hand.

I looked at him in puzzlement. I didn't know what there was to admire in that broken branch.

At last, he tried hard not to laugh and looked up at me. "People normally give each other a branch of willow as a parting gift because willow (柳 liu) represents the unwillingness to let someone go (留 liu). You, on the other hand, is giving me a mimosa branch to say goodbye. Does this mean you want to have some..."

I looked at him in greater bewilderment: "What?"

He put away the branch and, in all seriousness, succinctly spat out two words: "Happy time." (mimosa 合欢 lit. means "happy together" *i.e.* "have sex")

"... Keep dreaming, buddy!"

Zhisu stood quietly to the side while we were carrying on. The white-robed loon, who had been stifling his laughter, finally could not stop himself from laughing out loud: "Your R... Mister Mu, were did you pick up such a darling?" His voice sounded strangely familiar. Mu Yan bowed his head to help me fix my collar, sparing the man no reply. As for me, I was silently trying to recall where I had heard his voice before. Before I could figure it out, the white-robed man had slowly stepped out from the halo of the bronze mirror's glare.

Under the morning light, I was stunned to see his gradually clearer face. A forehead seemingly chiseled from marble, a pair of painted eyebrows, autumn lake eyes, and nonchalant manners – in addition to being a few years older than the young man I saw last night, I didn't see any other differences. Gong'yi Fei of Peizhong. The black circular object he had been playing in his right hand also caught my attention. I arched an eyebrow and asked him before I could stop myself: "Whose bracelet are you holding?"

He stopped and then brought the jade bracelet up to the sunlight. "Do you also think it's beautiful?" His eyes were filled with an indulgent smile full of love, yet the words he said were unfeelingly cold: "I don't know. I seemed to have been born with it." Not a word was mentioned of the bracelet's original owner.

Mu Yan entrusted me to Gong'yi Fei. Even though I was doubtful of this man's comportment, I silently gave up trying to figure things out and patiently waited for Mu Yan to finish talking to him as I thought back to the philosophy of life in troubled times that master had taught me when he was still alive. In life, you

should mind your own business. If you see injustice on the street, go another way.

I didn't know what they were saying to each other, only hearing Gong'yi Fei's faint teasing laughter: "I bet no one will believe that the legendary cautious Mister Mu also has a weakness. And she's a delicate little girl at that. If the two princesses of Tang and Lou found out, they might vomit blood and die of it."

I perked my ears and craned my neck to see Mu Yan's reaction. He waved his fan slightly in my direction before quickly turning sideways again, an airy smile hovering on his profile. I heard him say in his deliberately low voice: "Shouldn't you know this kind of things better than anyone else? We should either destroy our so-called weakness or carefully protect it. Most of those who dreamed big had chosen the former; such had almost always been the case throughout history. I, on the other hand, have always felt that life is too short and fleeting. Having a weakness might not be such a bad thing."

Gong'yi Fei looked up at him in surprise, and to be honest, so did I. Perhaps aware of my gaze, his eyes slightly glanced over. I quickly fixed my lapel and sat still, pretending not to hear anything while looking away to the side. In my mind, though, I was secretly telling myself I was to be very, very good to this man.

Soon after, the two ended their conversation. Gong'yi Fei trailed behind Mu Yan as they slowly made their way over to me. The sun had risen high in the sky; it was almost time to leave. Mu Yan seemed he wanted to say something to me, but I did not give him the chance. I fought to speak first, afraid there wasn't enough time left. Tugging on his sleeve, I hastened to say everything I had been wanting to say to him.

"Go to bed early and don't stay up all night."

He probably thought I was being childish.

"Cover yourself at night and don't kick the quilt away."

In these parting moments, more experienced girls would likely have smarter things to say.

"Remember to put on more clothes when it's cold. Don't neglect your health just because you think you're healthy."

But I didn't know any of that stuff.

"Don't be picky. You have to eat some of everything whether it's meat or vegetables."

If I were by his side, this was how I would slowly learn to take care of him.

The entire bamboo cottage fell silent. I didn't hear anyone's jeers this time either. Not having said the most important thing, I licked my lips and took a breather to go on. With my throat feeling dry, I was about to start again when I was suddenly interrupted by a grinning Mu Yan: "Shouldn't I be the one telling you these things...?"

"I'm being serious," I glared at him.

He held his gaze on me for a time, stopped joking, put away his fan, and finally nodded: "Alright, I'll make sure to remember. Anything else?"

I felt it difficult to go on after mustering up my courage only to get interrupted. I looked up for a quick glance at him, cleared my throat, then stared back down at the ground. "Yes, there's more." I adjusted my voice to sound vehement: "You can't look at pretty girls. Even if they come to talk to you, you have to ignore them!"

He laughed and placed his hands on my shoulders: "Got it, anything else?"

Suddenly feeling a little sad, I dolefully bowed my head and stared at the toes of my shoes. "You have to come back as soon as you can to pick me up."

He lifted my head to regard me for a moment and then kissed my forehead. "I'll come for you when the hibiscus season is over."

On a scorching summer day, we each went our way. One downhill, the other towards the mountain – two opposite roads that extended thousands of miles, like a destiny without an ending.

I had no way of seeing the future, but I felt a vague uneasiness. Since the beginning of time, parting couples who used flower seasons as their promise always seemed to miss their date. For once the season was over they'd be late. For once they were late the season would be over.

Categories: [Hua Xu Yin](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Hua Xu Yin](#), [Tang Qi Gong Zi](#),

[Translation](#), [华胥引](#), [唐七公子](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 12.2

Hua Xu Yin (华胥引) – Chapter 12.2

[July 19, 2015](#) by [peanuts](#) [12 Comments](#)



This is the last part of hamster's translation. All of you should know by now, why she is stopping the translation and also took down Three Lives Three Worlds Ten Miles of Peach Blossom and The Pillow Book translations from her blog. Thus, don't ask me where you can read them because I don't know. Also, I can't ask her for a copy and distribute them around as it would defeat the purpose of her taking them down in the first place. Maybe one day, she will post them back so all you can do is wait.

I am not sure what will happen to this translation since it has changed hands so many times. I am trying to have it finished but there are always so many obstacles in the way. I just want to know in view of the plagiarism accusation against Tang Qi and the fairly conclusive evidence in Ten Miles of Peach Blossoms, are you still interested to read this novel? It is a waste of time and

effort to translate something that very little people is interested in reading.

If you want a summary of Jiu Jiu's story, click [here](#).

Part 3 – Chapter 2.2 (translated by hamster)

Cheerful scenes scrolled past us, with swallows and orioles tweeting the entire way. Soon, a long and mottled green stairway came into sight. Large shades from the canopies above coupled with jadeite moss on the stone steps made the stairway resemble a dark stretch of satin fabric embroidered with a matching colored fringe. I stopped to look up at the beautiful columns, the buildings with curving jade roofs, and the blindingly brilliant multicolor bead curtain. It was the same scene I saw last night, down to the majestic gate.

“Are you tired, Miss Jun?” Gong’yi Fei turned to look at me.

In truth, I had stopped because a tall figure holding a paper umbrella had snuck into my mind. I shook my head and followed him all the way up the ancient green stone path. When we got near the mountain gate, I couldn’t stop myself from asking: “Does Guzhu Mountain belong to the Gong’yi family?”

Gong’yi Fei who was leading the way came to a pause. His white figure was captured in the great bronze mirror hanging in the middle of the building. “It hadn’t always been. Guzhu Mountain is a sacred land of hibiscuses. Visitors used to flood the mountain came every flowering season that I decided to buy it five years ago. In the end, it’s better to leave a tranquil place like this quiet.”

I took two steps closer to him, right below the gate, and touched the sunkissed glass bead curtain. “The gate must be quite old, but this curtain looks brand new.”

Gong’yi Fei faintly smiled as he turned the jade bracelet in his hand. “It *should* be new if I change one out every month. I’m not sure how much money I’ve burned in the last five years on this item.” He then swept his fingers across the curtain strands and invited me in: “Miss Jun, after you.” Suddenly touched, the beads made jingling sounds.

I reached out to stabilize the ringing beads. “It’s all right to take the curtain down, you know. Changing for a new one over and over like this is somewhat of a

waste.”

He bowed his head in seeming contemplation. “You’re right, of course, but I would feel something was missing if I took it down.”

“And that is?”

He stared ahead, pensively brushing aside a curtain strand. “The rush of burning money, perhaps...”

“...”

I didn’t know what this gate meant to Gong’yi Fei. He didn’t seem to care and perhaps had forgotten that he had met a woman here in his youth. A girl with long black hair in a white dress, holding a paper umbrella. A girl he didn’t know had died some place away, some time ago. Great trees stood next to the gate. The moment we stepped past, I felt countless pairs of eyes hiding in the foliage looking at me coldly. This tall gate represented the fixation belonging to that dead woman that couldn’t dissipate. But I didn’t deal with the dead.

Behind the gate was another stone stairway with a hundred steps. On top lay a large courtyard shaded by verdure, its scale comparable to a royal palace. In retrospect, the Gong’yi clan was extremely rich. To be this rich, they had to either been supported by the government or an anti-government force.

It was very worrying that Mu Yan actually had relations with this family.

No one spoke along the way. When we got near the residence, I saw that the gate was closed shut and no one was standing in front. While I was thinking it odd, a young boy dressed like a servant rode a malnourished horse and stumbled forth. He knelt in front of Gong’yi Fei while blubbering out: “Master, you’ve returned! Madam and the eldest mistress are fighting each other. Xiaofeng’s going to die. Cui’er jiejie told me to hurry and go find you...”

Before the young boy could finish, a white figure had flashed by. Gong’yi Fei had brought me up on the thin gasping horse and shot away like an arrow around the high walls of the courtyard. Seated on the horse, I only had time to ask: “Madam? Eldest mistress? Who are they?”

Gong’yi Fei’s ambiguous answer came from above my head: “My older sister and my wife have been at odds for some time now. They occasionally get into

small arguments. I'm quite embarrassed to have let Miss Jun witness such a thing." But there was no embarrassment detected from him.

With the wind whistling in my ears, the Devil pushed me to ask: "Is this sister your twin?"

The person behind me fell silent. Then at length, he laughed and answered straightforwardly: "So we are."

My hands slipped from the horse's mane, causing me to almost lose my control and fall off the horse. *How could that be?* I muttered those four words three times. In the end I did not say it aloud and swallowed the whistling cold wind back in.

Honestly, Gong'yi Fei's having a twin sister who was still well and alive was as unbelievable as Jun Wei's saying he had always had a crush on me. According to legends, the Gong'yi family in Peizhong would never allow twins to exist. If twins were born, one would be kept and one must be killed.

This was mostly because the guardian beast Qianhe was too useless. It had always been said that the Gong'yi head of household established their authority through the summoning of this beast. At the same time, this useless beast couldn't tell the difference between twins. Imagine, if the Gong'yi family gave birth to a pair of twins and the older brother would one day inherit the head position, after he confirmed blood ties with the Qianhe beast and obtained the ability to summon it, if the younger brother with similar blood were to impersonate his twin to summon the beast to rebel, it would all be too easy.

Like an undefeated hero who could only die if he suffered from a terminal illness such as cancer, these twins were cancerous to the Gong'yi clan – they were a cancer called internal strife. No matter how powerful, a family would fall if it had infighting among members. Wise elders had realized this since the early days. Through seven hundred years of clan history, many unlucky heads of household had given birth to twins. Even a pigeon pair would be dealt with. The chosen one would be favored by the gods, having the attention of everyone. The abandoned one would be as insignificant as a blade of grass, immediately losing his life.

The interesting thing was that almost all of the best heads of household were

one half of a pair. The first debt they incurred after coming into the world was the debt of kin blood. Such circumstances had perhaps turned people heartless.

Seven years ago when the Gong'yi clan was destroyed, I seemed to have heard this generation's head of household had a twin sister. At the time I could only let out a small sigh. It surprised me to know now that this twin sister was actually still alive. Hadn't she been thrown into the Taihao River to feed their guardian beast the moment she was born?

It was later proven that I was completely making a fuss out of nothing. The amazing thing was much more than that. Like some unknown philosopher had said, life is always full of surprises. If you aren't about to be surprised then you are already being surprised as we speak.

The thin horse carrying us panted to an open green space. In a small loess field, a leathery black steed neighed and then came crashing down to the ground, splashing red dust in the air. Gong'yi Fei carried me as we dismounted the horse. By the time we landed on the ground, I saw a red-robed woman with a sword in her hand kneeling next to the horse lying on the ground. She was holding onto her right arm as though she had suffered an injury. Her angry face was that of a beautiful rose, vivid and plump, and mesmerizingly beautiful. The servants panicked and got out of our way. Gong'yi Fei hurried over to help her up. He seemed to have touched her wound, for the woman groaned as she supported herself on her sword. With her uninjured hand, she grabbed Gong'yi Fei's arm and sobbed to him: "Go take a look at Xiaofeng. See if the crazy woman had killed him yet!"

Gong'yi Fei who had always been pleasant was furrowing his brow at this time. He patiently supported the red-attired woman to check the fallen horse. My eyes were fixed on the white-robed woman standing beside the hitching post not far from there. I could not move my eyes away for a long time. Her dark hair flowed like a waterfall. Her deep eyes shone like freezing lakes. A black jade headband adorned her forehead. In her hand was a silver nine-section whip.

Qing Jiujiu of Yong'an. The woman I thought had died was standing under the morning light like an ice sculpture, drawing a long shadow at her feet, a living and breathing person. I stared at her for a moment, feeling compelled to approach her. I then suddenly heard Gong'yi Fei's deep voice asking: "Xun jie,

what had happened?”

He was looking up in her direction. The red-robed woman in his arms fought to control her shaking hands, tears of resentment filled her eyes. The black horse nearby called Xiaofeng (Night Wind) went completely still after drawing a long gasp of breath.

Xun jie?

She faintly spoke with a voice that sounded like clashing gems: “Her fencing is poor, so I accidentally hurt her when I slipped my hand. As for the horse, didn’t it throw you off yesterday? What use is there in keeping an inferior horse that couldn’t even recognize its owner?”

My eyes were glued on the white-robed woman who replied. Her eyes gave a sweep as cold as a thousand years of snow. She paused, drew back her rod, whipped around and left.

The red-robed woman started blubbering: “She killed Xiaofeng, and wounded me, but you just let her go...”

Gong’yi Fei coldly interrupted her: “You were too hot-tempered. She is not right in the head. I have told you to leave her alone, but you just had to provoke her.”

“Are you even my husband or not?” the red-robed woman glared at him.

Gong’yi Fei helped her up by her uninjured arm. “Good question. Except for me, ask yourself if anyone else in this world would indulge you like this.”

She pushed his hand away to stand up by herself, her eyes were still teary, but she bit her lips to say bitterly: “The one who loved me the most will always be my father, but he, he...” She hadn’t finished when she squatted to the ground and burst out crying again.

Gong’yi Fei also knelt down. Taking out a handkerchief from his sleeve, he handed it to her: “Don’t cry. Look at yourself. Do you look like a grown married woman like this?”

Although his voice was harsh, his words were gentle.

I looked up in the direction Qing Jiujiu had left. The sun was moving behind

small puffs of clouds, leaving behind odd-shaped shadows on the lawn. Floating dandelions grazed the grass. Golden hibiscuses were in full bloom on the mountainside and plains. That white figure went further and further away, disappearing into the hibiscuses.

I didn't see Qing Jiujiu again for the next five days. The servants told me she wasn't called Qing Jiujiu, but Gong'yi Xun, the twin sister of Gong'yi Fei. She had been lost since she was young, living a very pitiful life. On a moonlit night two years ago she was brought to the Gong'yi estate, finally reuniting with her twin brother after years of separation.

I heard that Gong'yi Fei's wife, Gong'yi Shan, could not accept such a thing that night. She had thought that person to be a fake and had angrily gone to the reception hall. But she had froze on the spot when she saw Gong'yi Xun's face. I wanted to know the ending, but the servant who was excitedly telling the story suddenly stopped. Afterwards, no matter how I asked, he was no longer willing to talk. I supposed it wasn't proper to banter with an outsider about an eldest mistress who had a mental problem.

I didn't know if Gong'yi Xun really had a screw loose. It didn't seem like it, but if Gong'yi Fei said she had a problem, it meant she had a problem. Just like when my father thought I was a coldblooded girl, even if my blood was surging it was meaningless. This is the power of those in authority.

Through many casual chitchats, I learned that Gong'yi Fei seemed to look down on his twin sister. It was said that when Gong'yi Xun had just returned, there didn't yet exist any major problem despite their weak bond. After all, they had been separated for so long that it was normal to have a distance between them.

But this apparent harmony only lasted for two months. Gradually, everyone noticed that there were times when Gong'yi Xun did really inexplicable things. Of course, she did very little most of the time. But once she did something, trouble was basically waiting to happen.

On the third month since Gong'yi Xun came back to the Gong'yi family, a friend came by to invite Gong'yi Fei to an eagle fight. The two eagles flew after each other in the air. After another powerful offensive, one was wounded and

wanted to make an escape. The other chased after it in hot pursuit. Both flew straight toward Gong'yi Fei who was sitting on the stands. Gong'yi Xun who sat beside him instantly killed the eagles with her nine-section whip... In the end, they had to reimburse the gentleman with a substantial amount of money. This was the first time Gong'yi Xun showed extreme protectiveness over Gong'yi Fei.

Plenty of similar incidents happened in the following two years, plenty of money was paid out by the Gong'yi family in compensation, and at the same time, plenty of assassins who tried or were about to try to harm Gong'yi Fei died under Gong'yi Xun's nine-section whip. They became known as the 'three plenties'. (1)

- The Three Plenties 三多 is a term used to identify three symbols of good fortune. It consists of the peach (longevity), the pomegranate (progeny) and the citron (happiness).

Although I had many brothers and sisters, they were all my half siblings. Moreover, we almost never spent time together. I couldn't exactly understand the sibling bond people spoke of. My closest friend since I was young would be Jun Wei. But in my imagination, if one day Jun Wei who liked to write novels hoped to have the only copy of a certain famous writer's masterpiece, but the novelist's son dictated that only if I married him would he give Jun Wei that copy, I pondered for a moment whether I would agree... In the end, I felt that even if Jun Wei were to knock me unconscious with a stick and force me to get married, I would still run away when I woke up... However, faced with the same thing, Gong'yi Xun had nodded. Just for a chess manual so she could give her twin brother the best birthday gift.

According to rumors, Gong'yi Fei only found out when the other party sent betrothal gifts over. He might as well have thrown the team of housekeeper and servants who brought the gifts over out the Gong'yi door. The person who could always keep on smiling without blinking an eye even as Taishan collapsed around him was beyond furious at this time.

Afterwards, the siblings who were already distant became increasingly estranged. According to what the servants said, Gong'yi Fei acted as though he didn't even have this sister thereafter.

Gong'yi Fei said that Gong'yi Xun's mind wasn't very sound. I didn't think he was just saying it. Perhaps after going through those things, he really felt there was something wrong with her mental state. But I knew what he did not. No matter what they thought, I knew that Gong'yi Xun was no other than Qing Jiujiu.

Admittedly, the Qing Jiujiu who held an umbrella standing at the mountain entrance had passed away. There was a kind of existence in this world where dispersed consciousness and residual spirit condensed anew inside the body. After the condensation, they would forget all things from the past life. If they came to existence, this creature would be known as a phantom.

I didn't believe Qing Jiujiu was Gong'yi Fei's twin sister. The Gong'yi clan had never dragged their feet with the disposal of their twins; there were no chances for loopholes. If Qing Jiujiu wasn't Gong'yi Fei's twin sister, then Qing Jiujiu's residual spirit being condensed into Gong'yi Xun's body was naturally not possible either.

But ultimately it was only my intuition.

Master Jun had hoped I wouldn't stir too much trouble after leaving home. When I was younger I had thought knowledge was bliss; I did not know it was ill luck. After growing up and being cornered to a dead-end, I realized ignorance was often bliss. The less I knew of this world the happier I would likely be. For that reason, I restrained the urge to approach Gong'yi Xun.

Even though I didn't go look for her, she went to look for me.

It was a cold windy day. In the small guest courtyard, crepe myrtle flowers swayed in the wind, purple and deep blue, undulating into a tranquil sea of sparkling waves. Looking leisure in her white robe, Gong'yi Xun came through the flowers like a ripple in front of my eyes. Looking at me from the other side of the window, she at last said, "This big world is really full of wonders. I am a phantom while you're a dead corpse branded by the Huaxu enchantment."

Although I could guess what she had come to see me for, this was an opening I did not predict. I opened the door and invited her in: "Legend has it a phantom is formed from condensed spirit. It's supposed to be very sensitive, and I see now that that is indeed true. Most people cannot see any difference between my

dispersed spirit and the real living, let alone the ancient Huaxu magic sealed within me.”

She slightly lowered her eyelids. Behind them were a pair of emotionless eyes, faintly blue like the sky reflected in the water of winding mountain streams.

I leaned on my palm and asked her: “Why have you come to find me? Do you want me to weave a dream for you? If you have heard of the Huaxu enchantment, then you must know the price to pay for me to weave a dream?” I looked into her eyes. “You can’t afford it. A phantom’s life means nothing to me.”

She lifted her eyes, her gaze sweeping across the undulating crepe myrtle flowers beyond the window. “Weave a dream? The sorcerer who helped me condense my spirit once mentioned of this function of the Huaxu enchantment. But I’m not interested in any illusory dreams of yours. I don’t know what price the Huaxu enchantment requires for weaving a dream, I bet not many know in this world. What I want is much more real than that.” She regarded me. “You must be able to see the memories of my past life sealed within my body.”

My face slipped off my palm and hit the table with a smack, showing how shocking this all was. If reincarnation existed, a phantom would be like human reincarnation. Just as we are not born with the memory of the past, phantoms are the same. How could there be the so-called memory of a past life?

Perhaps she saw my doubts, her snowy fingers came to rest beneath her eyes, a pair of pale blue pupils. “This is where my human memory is sealed. They said that I died seven years ago, then a sorcerer spent five years to help me condense my soul. He extracted the remnants of consciousness before I died and sealed them into two beads, then embedded them anew into my body. But the me now isn’t the same me then. Without those memories, I am nothing.”

I looked at her curiously: “Then why did you come to look for me? You only need to ask that sorcerer to unlock his seal, then you will be whole again.”

There was a draft at the window. A glimmer flashed in her eyes. Before I could catch onto it, they had stilled again: “Zi’ke was right. It wasn’t a good life considering I had died so young. I don’t need such memories. He had asked for the help of a sorcerer to embed my soul. I was told I owed Ah Fei much in my

past life and that my only wish was to repay him. So I took this opportunity to come back to life and live a brand new one. Recently I was thinking, however, that no matter how bad an existence was, it should still have some worthwhile memories. When Zi'ke brought me to the Gong'yi family, he said Ah Fei has always missed me. Now I'm starting to doubt those words. The sorcerer had no way to see the memories sealed inside of me. They can only unlock the seal like you suggested. But I have no interest in knowing about the bad memories. Only good ones would be enough. The Huaxu enchantment might be able to do this. If you are willing to help me, I'll try to help you with whatever it is you want. As for my memory, after you look into it, please tell me about the good things."

She was right, the Huaxu enchantment could indeed see into memories that had been sealed. It was almost like spying on others' dreams. With that said, I should pay attention to my own safety once I entered, even if there was no harm other than that.

"Zi'ke?" I whispered at length. "The style name of Su Yu, the Crown Prince of Chen?"

She looked at me, lightly nodded and answered, "Yes. Su Yu, Su Zi'ke."

I laughed. "I'll help you. I don't need anything from you in return."

Master Jun had saved my life so that I would assassinate the King of Chen. I'd departed for a long time but I had yet to make any preparations for it. I could now use her memory to search for information. I almost forgot to mention, the Gong'yi clan was a formidable force of Chen seven years prior.

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